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Abigail McCarthy
'COMPASSION FATIGUE'
The Editors
SOUTH AFRICA

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Correspondence

Black bishops' letter

Cleveland, Ohio

To the Editors: Thank you so much for your complimentary words on "What We Have Seen and Heard," in the November 30 issue of *Commonweal.*

You honored the black bishops and black Catholics even more by placing your remarks in the context of the witness of two contemporary exemplars of the Christian faith, Bishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Archbishop Denis Hurley. Our exhortation appears as only a spark next to these luminous lights of truth and justice.

I am pleased to say that, while the pastoral letter is addressed to African-American Catholics, so many other ethnic communities have told me of the inspiration they have received from it. Many others remarked that the pastoral provides apt material for homilies and catechetical instruction for the white community. Father Norman Perry, editor of *Saint Anthony Messenger,* has informed me that this document is in its second printing and is selling "like hotcakes"!

Speaking for the black bishops, I can only say "Thanks be to God" that He chose us to utter the spiritual riches of our people at this moment in history.

MOST REV. JAMES P. LYKE, O.F.M.
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland

Abortion & stereotypes

Chapel Hill, N.C.

To the Editors: As one who has been a "pro-life" activist for several years, I do not find the Callahans' article "Breaking Through the Stereotypes" [October 5] to be surprising. In fact, I have never been able to understand how the usual stereotypes have managed to persist.

You have done a real service to those of us who work to end abortion simply by so accurately presenting the nuances of the various positions. Your article creates the environment necessary for dialogue to occur.

Prolifers for Survival has been working since 1978 to nurture such dialogue on both the issues of nuclear weapons and abortion. For a clear and thoughtful presentation of the dialogue-behind-the-stereotypes I highly recommend, *Building Bridges: The Prolife Movement & the Peace Movement* by Steve Levicoff ($7.50 from P.S., P.O. Box 3316, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27515). The book pays special attention to the under-explored areas of feminism and nonviolence in relation to the pro-life movement.

SCOTT RAINS

Defending the powerless

Wausau, Wis.

To the Editors: There is a fundamental abortion disagreement not mentioned in "Breaking through the Stereotypes," Sidney and Daniel Callahan [October 5].

In some situations, a ban on all abortions transfers helplessness and defenselessness from the unborn child to the mother. A mother whose life is seriously threatened by an unborn child is totally powerless to defend her future under a total ban. The woman impregnated during rape or incest is powerless to refuse sexual intercourse and thus powerless to make a responsible decision to conceive a child. A total ban does not defend her in her helplessness.

This poses a dilemma for those who believe their government should defend the helpless. Adoption and social aid can protect women who are helpless to nurture a child to maturity because of their social circumstances. Thus a ban on abortion in these cases combined with social aid can defend both the powerless unborn and the powerless born — mother and born child.

But in situations in which the powerless unborn and the powerless born cannot both be defended, those who oppose a total ban on abortions believe the decision whether to defend the unborn or the born should be the legal responsibility of the individual mother, not the government, because our government does not have the constitutional right to mandate in favor of defending one over the other. Obviously this is not the basis for the Supreme Court decision. But it is the basic issue for many who oppose a total ban.

Those who support a total ban do not appear to recognize this dilemma. They do not regard the helplessness and defenselessness of women in these situations as a compelling moral or legal consideration because they believe the unborn innocent take precedence absolutely over the born non-innocent. Thus the only situation in which abortion is acceptable is the ectopic pregnancy — an unavoidable physiological situation in which the mother's life is the only life that can be saved. This is their bottom line.

But this relative innocence of the unborn and the born and the relative value of each or their relative deservingness of defense because of their relative innocence are theological determinations of a particular religious belief and thus outside the legitimate province of our civil government. This is the bottom line for those who personally abhor abortion but oppose a legal ban on all abortions.

MARILYN KRAM

No Catholic women?

Dearborn, Mich.

To the Editor: Geraldine Ferraro dramatically offered to resign from office if her private faith and her public obligations were ever in conflict. Such a pledge worked in 1960 when John Kennedy's detractors were Protestants who suspected the Catholic hierarchy of trying to manipulate public policy. . . .

(Continued on page 28)

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Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

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SOUTH AFRICA: MEDICINE OF CHOICE

IN THE PRIMAL act of creation, God chose ossified dust and dry bones to manifest the incomprehensible. God breathed forth the power of decision, and what was dry and barren became flesh and blood.

It is the capacity for decision that transforms humans from random constructs of the most intricate and detailed chance into images of God. It is both a burden and an exaltation, one that dogs and delights. Ultimately, the capacity for decision expresses the essence of our human nature: we are deemed worthy to be accountable. We are chosen; we must choose; and what is true for individuals must be true for societies as well.

Take, for example, the governments of South Africa and the United States. South Africa has chosen apartheid as the framework of its political and social structures. Its white minority has done this consciously, over generations, with disciplined foresight, employing brutal sanctions. The government of South Africa legally denies the full personhood of the majority of its people. When President Reagan and Archbishop Tutu sit in dialogue, the South African government does not see two people: it sees one and a fraction. In his own homeland, the Archbishop of Johannesburg cannot vote.

The question for the United States then is one of complicity. Are we aware that the archbishop is not considered a full person by Pretoria? With what assurance do we sit opposite him, looking into his face, and say the situation in South Africa has gotten better for non-persons in the last four years because of our many and mighty efforts?

Those who live in the situation ought to know better, and do. They boldly state the contrary: in their arrests, blood, imprisonment, and dying. They tell us that four more years of American "constructive engagement" is the wrong medicine for transforming South African apartheid. They appeal to us as agents of choice who make a *de facto* difference in the manner in which they live.

We applaud them. We applaud our own citizens who have taken to the steps of South African consulates across this land in recent months demanding an end to the lie. They are being heard: in the White House and the Transvaal.

The choice must now be to fortify and enlarge this wave of moral indignation with our own voices so that the sea mounts up and opens a way on to dry land.

Despite its being submerged, that land is ready. In 1978 the Bergstraesser Institute of Freiburg, Germany concluded a study showing that most whites in South Africa expect black majority rule by the year 2000. In 1981 a Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored study found that while most South African whites resist fundamental change, beneath the surface there exists tangible unrest and widespread ferment, a basis for realistic openness to change and accommodation. In the United States the moral pressures on financial and political bodies must continue to intensify.

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A realistic voice for change in U.S. policy for a generation has been the Reverend Leon Sullivan. Yet, the *New York Times* reported on December 13, it is only now with pressures growing in the U.S. that 120 American companies which operate in South Africa have agreed to Sullivan's demands to press for broad changes in South Africa, including the repeal of all apartheid laws. "This is the first time American companies have entered the political arena in South Africa and pushed for an end to apartheid," Sullivan said.

The wave mounts. The December *Letter* of the Ford Foundation calls for basic changes in South Africa's education policy. It notes, "The government spends eight times more per capita for white students than it does for blacks." That the Foundation lets this be known is a sign of promise.

In December, the Lutheran Church of America intensified its efforts to influence corporations doing business in South Africa, threatening divestment of church-held stock if those companies did not adopt the "Tutu Conditions" as a code of conducting business in South Africa. A sign of promise.

In *The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation* (Orbis, $9.95, 268 pp.) Marjorie Hope and James Young write of the man who guided them through the poverty rows of Soweto, the black township near Johannesburg. As they parted he spoke to them of the endless nightmares of apartheid. "Don't you understand?" he said. "We just want to *breathe*."

To breathe. Our moral decisions in 1985 must be concerted acts to breathe forth life; painful and exalting as such acts must be.

THE FIRST JOB IS JOBS

With all the talk about tax simplification and budget cuts (freezes?) the question of national priorities has finally hit the fan. What appeared to be a unified electorate now seems engaged in a tug-of-war among interests. Individual states, economic lobbies, and advocacy groups have been anxiously surveying the proposals from the Treasury Department to determine what effect each change will have for them.

Yet as the entire country seems plugged into separate economic head sets, only the American Catholic bishops have unequivocally stated the number one national priority: jobs. "The most urgent priority for U.S. domestic economic policy is the creation of new jobs with adequate pay and decent working conditions." A healthy economy? Yes, but health is illusory with 7 percent unemployment. Tax reform? Yes, but with 8 million people out of work even an increase in revenue will not cover the real social costs of joblessness: unemployment compensation, food stamps, welfare, and a host of indirect social costs, as well as a reduced tax base. Hope for economic growth as a curative looks misguided as long as we are locked into a conservative Keynesian trade-off: to bring down inflation is to tolerate higher unemployment.

A crash program of job creation, job training, and job placement will not, of itself, be enough — at least not unless we are thinking about long-term jobs with real pay. Why?

THE "TUTU CONDITIONS," named for Archbishop Desmond Tutu who proposed them as a first step in creating just social change in South Africa, include the following elements: Housing of workers in family-type accommodations near the place of work of the breadwinner; recognizing workers' rights to obtain the best possible wages; enforcing fair labor practices; and making massive investments in black education and training.

Because the unemployed are disproportionately black, Hispanic, young, and female heads of households, the same groups that compose the poor (plus children) and whose current job possibilities so often promise inadequate wages. Furthermore, the much hailed technological revolution threatens to perpetuate a dual wage scale: high wages for trained technicians and designers; low wages for operators and assemblers. Joining this latter group will be those laid off from heavy industry, many of whom will find themselves earning half their former wages. What is needed is the creation of jobs that produce goods and services valuable to society, for which investors will risk capital and employers will pay competitive wages. We're optimistic enough to think that government and private business can stimulate such employment, but not if no one is even directing attention to what remains the number-one economic priority: jobs.

IS ROME ANTI-CATHOLIC?

All right, I admit it — that headline is hyperbolic. So is another I had in mind: IS THE VATICAN PRO-CHOICE? Behind the hyperbole, however, is a real question. The actions of some people in the Vatican seem almost willfully calculated to harm the church and to injure the anti-abortion cause these same people purport to be defending. Why?

Specifically I am thinking about the recent action taken by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (SCRIS) against two dozen women and one man in religious orders who signed an ad sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice. According to SCRIS these individuals must either publicly retract their adherence to the statement or face expulsion from their orders.

Now I am no fan of either Catholics for a Free Choice or of this particular ad, which was run in the *New York Times* last October 7. As far as I can ascertain, the moving forces behind the statement were Daniel Maguire and Marjorie Reiley Maguire. The Maguires are to the pro-choice movement what Michael Novak is to free enterprise. Like Novak, the Maguires make the case theologically for what, in fact, is pretty much the status quo in society, all the while presenting themselves, with justification, as dissenting underdogs in the church. Again like Novak, the Maguires have a fondness for making appeals that are vague and unexceptionable in themselves, but that take on a definite meaning from their context and from what questions they choose to address and not to address.

So it was with this ad. An outspoken pro-life friend of mine said that she had no quarrel with 95 percent of it. In some respects, its claims were minimal: first, that "a large number" of Catholic

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theologians might differ with the official teaching that abortion is morally wrong "in all instances"; second, that polling data found only a fraction of American Catholics opposed to abortion "in all circumstances." This "diversity of opinions" necessitated a "candid and respectful discussion" of abortion within the church, free of institutional penalties. Catholics should not seek "the kind of legislation that curtails the legitimate exercise of the freedom of religion and conscience or discriminates against poor women." All this is pretty mild as far as the abortion debate goes.

But the ad was a dud. Although the text had been circulated widely among Catholic theologians, what is striking is how few chose to sign it. The names of numerous eminent theologians, many of whom have frequently taken dissenting or unpopular public positions, were noticeable by their absence. A number of outstanding feminist theologians, including contributors to this journal, were among the signers, although few who have written professionally in the area of morals or abortion. The list was ultimately filled out with the names of Catholic activists and academics from other fields.

Why had the statement received such a cool response among theologians? I spoke to a handful who had refused to sign, both men and women, but all outspoken on feminist issues. They certainly had not refused to sign out of fear — and they rather resented the sponsoring group's implication that fear was a major factor in keeping Catholic thinkers in line. (This is a staple argument of Catholics for a Free Choice.) Rather they believed that the ad gave a distinctly false impression, more by what it did *not* say than by what it did. It did not distinguish between the legal and moral dimensions of the problem, for instance, leaving the impression that the diversity of views among Catholics might be as wide in the one area as in the other. It did not indicate that the "diversity of opinions" among recognized Catholic moralists on the morality of direct abortion is largely limited to a very narrow set of "hard cases," leaving the impression that these differences might in fact extend to the wide range of conditions that the pro-choice movement accepts as justifying abortion. It did not recognize that what is at stake in the public debate about abortion is only secondarily the question of prohibiting, whether legally or morally, abortion "in all instances"; it is primarily a debate about the legacy of *Roe v. Wade* and a status quo which approaches abortion on demand. Projected into *that context*, the ad had quite a different meaning than some of its minimal wording might suggest. Sixty-point headlines announcing "A DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS REGARDING ABORTION EXISTS AMONG COMMITTED CATHOLICS," without indicating any limits to that diversity, could not help but be a declaration for the status quo, and the status quo not only legally but morally. Which is exactly what I believe the ad's sponsors had in mind.

Its sponsors but not necessarily all its signers. Some of the signers, of course, hold positions on abortion that are radical departures from Catholic tradition — and which ought to be argued openly (there have been, after all, radical departures in the past which were ultimately vindicated), but not advanced behind the stalking horse of "diversity of opinions." But other signers I gather (both from conversations and newspaper reports) were mainly reacting to what they saw as untoward intervention by bishops in the election campaign, to attacks on Geraldine Ferraro, and to attempts to mobilize Catholic voters on the abortion issue alone. Many doubtlessly read the statement largely in intramural terms as calling for a discussion *within* the church. Some had signed the statement months earlier, long before its sponsors decided to publish it in the *Times* in mid-election campaign.

So much for the ad. Catholics for a Free Choice tried to get as much mileage out of it as possible; but like most such ads, it enjoyed its day in the sun, and that was pretty much that. The American bishops, called upon to rebut the statement at their November meeting, delegated the task to its Committee on Doctrine. The committee issued what, to my mind, was a rather blanket reassertion of the "clear and constant teaching of the church" on abortion, but it quite rightly picked up on what the ad had implied without saying. Then the Vatican got into the act.

The intervention by SCRIS certainly poses questions of individual justice, of the proper application of canon law, of the appropriateness of the penalty which Vatican officials immediately invoked — expulsion from the religious family to which someone has pledged her life. But those questions are not so much my concern at the moment as understanding the mentality behind this action.

Consider this. With one masterful stroke SCRIS has (a) resurrected a forgotten statement from the dustheap of abortion manifestoes; (b) shifted attention from the issue of abortion to the issue of free speech and intellectual integrity (which is more or less what the ad wanted to do in the first place); (c) put Catholics for a Free Choice center stage and made them the beneficiary of sympathy for the penalized signers; (d) provided substance to the ad's claim that behind the appearance of Catholic opposition to abortion lurks the fear of ecclesiastical sanctions, whether of hellfire or expulsion from one's religious order; (e) made it more difficult for Catholic liberals and feminists to part company with their liberal and feminist associates on the question of abortion.

The latter two points are important. Perhaps the best way of picturing the folly of the SCRIS intervention is simply to imagine that it succeeded. Tomorrow several dozen nuns declare, "We recant. In view of the penalties threatened by the Vatican, we totally disavow our previous position." What would be the impact of such a performance on the credibility of Catholics in general, of the bishops in the area of public policy, indeed of Catholic pro-life activists themselves? The ghosts it would raise of a monolith in Rome would almost certainly alienate that moderately liberal "middle" of American public opinion which is essential for any viable resolution of the abortion question.

How did SCRIS manage to box itself and the church into such a no-win situation? One obvious possibility is that it just doesn't know what it is doing, that it doesn't understand the American situation, that it never thought through the consequences of its action. Disturbing as that possibility may be, it may still be the more consoling explanation. Another possibility is that SCRIS simply doesn't care. Perhaps it has no interest whatsoever in the credibility of American Catholics, in the respect the bishops have earned in the public arena, even in the effectiveness of the anti-abortion movement. Perhaps there is little more at work here than the purge mentality.

PETER STEINFELS

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Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

"COMPASSION FATIGUE"

FACING THE FAMINE, AN ACTRESS LIGHTS THE WAY

COMPASSION FATIGUE? Actor Cliff Robertson, winging into Washington to help attract media attention for the effort to get $1 billion in additional aid for the famine-stricken in Africa, said that he feared it. The public, so recently aroused to concern, might succumb to "compassion fatigue" and lose interest in the hungry there before the fight for increased aid could be won.

Those who are cynical about celebrities and their publicized causes might be tempted to jeer at his phrasing if it weren't so clearly true that it was a good, if awkward, attempt to give a name to an ugly fact: the tide of public sympathy rises quickly — and can ebb just as fast. By the time you read this the interest which holds us now in December may have already waned. The pitiful hordes of men and women carrying and leading their skeletal children in the almost hopeless search for food and water may already have faded from our collective consciousness. The all-seeing television eye will have turned elsewhere.

What stirs our compassion and what will keep it alive? What moves us to action? The question preoccupies those who worked to prevent the famine in Ethiopia, and work now to alleviate its effects on the poor drifting people. We do not really know. Steve Reynolds, a photographer who accompanied a World Vision team to Ethiopia, recalls having seen a documentary on hunger in Africa while he was a college student. "Great," he said to himself then, "another famine in Africa. Just what we need on television." He turned off the TV in disgust. But he could not turn off the people he saw. Perhaps what the rest of us have finally responded to is the combination of media attention and the testimony of those people who have also seen and are doing what they can.

A real answer to world hunger will require long and wearying efforts by many, many people on many levels. It is all too easy to turn away. Some of us find our excuse in blaming the profligate governments whose farm policies brought about the devastation of the rural areas and the rural economy. Some of us are outraged by the unjust and vituperative attacks of the Ethiopians in power. And some of us may feel that the only appropriate response to such overwhelming need would require the dedication of the rest of our lives. Sad and unwilling, like the rich young man of the Gospel, we turn elsewhere and do nothing.

For such attitudes there is the strong corrective of those who do not question but simply do what they can. Liv Ullmann is one of these. For some years now under the auspices of UNICEF she has been carrying the news of hungry children to audiences here and abroad.

She comes alone onto the auditorium stage. Her strong-boned Norwegian face with the deepset eyes and fresh color is luminous under the unrelieved stage lighting. Her fine-timbred actress's voice falls quietly into the hush.

"Every day," she tells the waiting audience, "forty thousand children die — forty thousand between one day and five years old. One every second. That means now. . . ." she pauses, ". . . and now . . . and now. . . ."

She tells us that the crisis in Ethiopia is not new — that thousands of deaths could have been prevented if public concern had been roused earlier. The first film we saw this year was made by the means of her group *three years ago*.

"And that little boy with the skull-like face and the little shrunken behind like an old man's — that little boy holding his empty bowl with great dignity because he understands that there is not enough food to go around," she says in momentary anguish, "— he is surely dead by now. We can only hope that image is bringing food to other children."

She has just come from Mali which will very soon be like Ethiopia. The desert is creeping five miles a year. "You can see it from the plane." There is drought and no water. But there are ways to help. Trees can be planted. New methods of agriculture and food preservation can prevent famine. Wells can be dug. It takes only the will, and the help of an aroused world community.

Liv Ullmann does not concern herself with the long-range solutions beyond affirming her confident belief that mankind has the brains, resources, and scientific knowledge with which to find them. She has seen victories, some small, some great, in her travels for UNICEF. A village in India living with renewed hope and health because of a newly dug well. Three million children immunized in one day as a result of a gigantic cooperative effort in Colombia — children who might otherwise have died in their first years of life. She persists in doing what she herself can do. She visits the camps and the projects. She does whatever is possible to publicize the tragic needs and to raise the money needed by workers in the field. She suffers neither burn-out nor compassion fatigue.

"They give me so much back," she says of the refugees. "They have warmth and personal dignity and such loving families. And for our little they extend friendship, and hospitality, and the desire to share with us even when they have nothing. They teach us what life is. I remember another little boy, one of the boat people, in a refugee camp in Hong Kong. They saw him watching the lights come on all over the city one night and the tears were rolling down his face. 'Do you cry because your family is gone and you have suffered so much?' they asked. 'No,' he said, 'I cry because the world is so beautiful.' " She adds, "I do what I do because I came to the stage where I felt I must give something back for what has been given to me. And now more has been given. I am an actress, and I must act and earn my living. But I keep on doing what I can." And to her audience and to us, "Everyone can do something."

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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Church/world watch

Debating deficits, debating deterrence

J. Bryan Hehir

AS THIS NEW YEAR begins in Washington, the issue which was so mysteriously absent in the election debates — nuclear arms policy — is clearly reemerging. Two levels of the nuclear question are evident. One is fundamental, the other tactical.

The fundamental argument goes right to the core concept of the nuclear age. Since the 1950s the organizing idea of U.S. nuclear policy has been deterrence. Admittedly, there have been different definitions of deterrence — from Massive Retaliation through Flexible Response and Mutual Assured Destruction to Countervailing Power — but each of these has rested upon the premise of deterrence. Today both the idea and the policy of nuclear deterrence are under attack from the left and the right of the political spectrum; both sides make a strategic *and* a moral argument against deterrence.

The challenge from the left issues equally from religious organizations and secular institutions. The argument is similar in both cases: deterrence is strategically too risky and morally defective. The strategic critique takes several forms: deterrence drives the arms race to new levels of danger; possession of the weapons will inevitably lead to their use; deterrence in sum, is tending to lead us toward rather than away from use. The moral critique is also multi-faceted. It focuses variously on the *risk* of deterrence, on the *cost* of the arms race, and on the *intention* which sustains the effective threat of deterrence.

In the early 1980s the critique of deterrence was almost entirely mounted from the left. This is no longer the case; the left critique has now been joined by a vigorous dissent from the right. The principal exponent is President Reagan, and the classical text was his Star Wars speech of March 1983. The speech was based on principles which are logically inimicable to deterrence. Its promise to free the world from the nuclear threat challenges the notion of deterrence en route to fulfilling that promise.

At this fundamental level of the nuclear debate, the critiques from the left and right offer a diagnosis of deterrence which is more profound than any proposals they offer as substitutes. The dissatisfaction with deterrence leaves a political-moral vacuum. It offers no immediate response. This is not an argument against the critics. But it does mean that while the fundamental level of the present debate is very important, in the short-run it will be indecisive.

While the fundamental debate about the very concept of deterrence proceeds, a tactical debate does also. This tactical debate must produce immediate policy decisions. Decisions are necessary immediately because a $200 billion deficit threatens the political and economic security of the nation. The deficit debate will provide a forum where economic, strategic, and moral arguments about defense policy and strategy will converge. The economic imperative is that cuts must be made *somewhere*. The strategic argument is that some strategic programs and systems in the budget are open to a substantial critique in terms of their impact on the arms race and the prospect of arms control.

The moral argument cuts across both the strategic and economic dimensions of the deficit debate. The first question is who will bear the burden of the national debt. The moral argument is central to the tradeoff of military *versus* non-military spending. The basic moral imperative is that the military budget should not be excluded or insulated from the budget-cutting process. If it is insulated, the burden of the debt will be borne by those least able to absorb more cuts in social spending. At this writing it appears that the president does not agree defense spending should be as vulnerable to cuts as other sectors of the budget.

The more complex argument is how to determine which cuts should be made *within* the defense budget. The deficit debate could force a useful examination of the content and character of the U.S. deterrent. It is precisely this kind of analysis which the bishops' pastoral letter sought to provoke with its "conditional moral acceptance" of deterrence. Following upon the pastoral, Cardinal Bernardin and Archbishop O'Connor testified before the Congress that certain criteria should be used in assessing proposed additions to the U.S. deterrent. In their view, a proposed system which is not demonstrably essential to deterrence and which is very costly should not be approved by Congress.

These criteria provide interesting guidance for the debate about the elements of the deterrent. Both the MX missile and the Star Wars program, for different reasons, seem to fail the test. For a system to be essential for deterrence, it should not move the deterrent balance toward less stabilitiy or in the direction which increases the chance of use of nuclear weapons. But these are precisely the charges brought against MX and Star Wars. The impact of the MX would contribute to the already dangerous trend toward "first-strike" pressures on both the Soviets and the United States. The Star Wars proposal drives the debate back to the fundamental level, for it challenges the very notion of deterrence, and at an astronomical cost.

Neither the MX nor Star Wars should survive the deficit debate. But they may unless the arguments are made against them.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

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The politics of moral vision

MICHAEL LERNER

REAGAN'S VICTORY in 1984 was assured not because he had done such a good job since assuming the presidency. Rather, it was assured because he knew what the struggle was really about, while Mondale showed no sign of understanding.

The 1984 election was the last round in the struggles begun in the 1960s — not those begun in the 1930s. Mondale and the leadership of the AFL-CIO wanted the campaign to be about the New Deal — but the fact is that the Republicans have basically accepted the New Deal ever since Eisenhower, and that the alterations they wish to make in terms of cutbacks of expenditures represent an insensitive tinkering with the system, not a desire to throw it out. Indeed, the use of massive military expenditures to spend us out of the recession of the early 1980s was Keynesian fine-tuning in the best Democratic party tradition, and relied on the same rhetoric that Jimmy Carter used his last years in office.

The struggles of the 1960s, however, are still being fought. Reagan came to prominence by standing up to the "Movement" of the sixties and articulating an alternative vision of values. It is that vision that propelled his most recent candidacy and made his campaign popular even among sections of the population who did not fare well materially under his presidency.

The Democrats and left-of-center activists generally have refused to take seriously the issues of moral vision, quality of life, and values. The current leaders of the Democrats remain, in an ironic way, vulgar Marxists — believing that economic issues are everything, and hoping that a combination of cutbacks and threats of economic chaos from the deficit would scare the American people into the liberal camp. Mondale was the prisoner of labor bureaucrats who for years have thought they could keep union members in line by simply bringing them a larger supply of material goodies, primarily in terms of wages and retirement benefits, while leaving aside questions of personal dignity, daily occupational stress, and a sense of control over one's work as matters to be resolved in the private lives of workers.

Not so the progressive forces of the 1960s. New Left activists were quick to raise visions of a whole different way of living — a way that involved challenging the relentless competition, elitism, bureaucratic control, racism, and sexism that we saw pervading American society. The moral power of those critiques was vast. While we laughed at the Nixon White House's overestimation of our power, and felt that their fear of revolution was "paranoia," we simultaneously refused to take seriously how incredibly deep we had struck at the system of domination. The Movement was suffused with surplus powerlessness — an intense but unconscious desire to lose, to fail, to prove the suspicion that most oppressed people hold — that they do not really deserve to have power. For that reason, we underestimated our incredible successes, and ignored how effective we had been in challenging the values upon which the system depends.

It was in this context that Reagan and the conservatives made their counteroffensive. They were unable to defend the Vietnam policy, crumbling at their feet; even today the legacy of anti-Vietnam sentiment amongst the electorate puts constraints on how dramatically they can move to defend U.S. imperial ambitions in Latin America. But the genius of Reagan and the New Right was that they confronted the New Left on its own turf — on the very questions of values that the New Left had raised. It was precisely on this clash of values that the New Right was to win its greatest support, legitimating conservative politics as a majoritarian position, for the first time in fifty years.

The New Left account of this victory is self-serving and distorted. Basically, the New Leftists (particularly those who have remained loyal to their youthful commitments), argue

MICHAEL LERNER *is dean of the Graduate School of Psychology at New College of California in San Francisco and director of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health in Oakland. He was chairman of Berkeley SDS in the 1960s, an editor of* Ramparts *magazine, and a national leader in the anti-Vietnam war movement. His book* Surplus Powerlessness *will be published later this year.*

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that the right has appealed to the most base motives in the population. Because the American people are fundamentally racist, classist, sexist, and afraid of any new ideas, afraid of being free, so the New Left argument went, the New Right could win the values argument: it simply played directly to these irrational elements in the American psyche. All that progressives can do in such circumstances is to try to "educate" people as to why these "bad attitudes" are really not in their long-term interests. However, it is this very approach which explains in part why the American people were never attracted to the New Left's positions. And it was this same moral arrogance that helped destroy the New Left as an effective political force.

This arrogance was fostered by a political vision that called for instant transformation. The New Left had the view that the one way to guarantee against selling out was for every person to live in the present the values of the future society for which we were struggling. This demand to make dramatic changes in the way we lived was a source of incredible moral power. But it also led to constant self-denigration and internally destructive behavior. Because we attempted to live the values of the future in the present, we could never be satisfied with what had already been achieved. Everything was to be measured in terms of a utopian future. There was no recognition of the internal and external constraints that might put limits on how much transformation any one person could make in any short amount of time. The constraints imposed by having to make a living in an oppressive work situation were largely unknown to the activists. The notion that people might have been sufficiently scarred from emotional deprivations in childhood to limit how quickly they could be expected to transcend their constituted emotional defenses was dismissed as bourgeois psychology. The result was a Movement in which everyone was always criticizing oneself and each other as not living up to the goals. Hardly a person escaped without feeling guilty for not being non-elitist, non-sexist, non-competitive, non-materialistic enough. In the name of creating a more humane future, and of living the values of that future in the present, the Movement became very inhumane. Many people fled from the experiment. They used the very categories of expectation that the Movement had created to justify their flight: the Movement had proved that politics does not work because, after all, people within the Movement turned out to be just as frail and wanting as everyone else.

The truth, of course, is that any such movement will inevitably have many of the same defects as the population as a whole. But the Movement activists had no compassion for themselves. They were as ruthless on themselves as they were on everyone else. Nor did they have a theory of society to help them understand what forces might limit transcendence. Their desire for instant change was itself a reflection of America's belief in the right of everyone to immediate gratification of all desires. Eventually, many of them left politics to find psychological methods for creating the self-transformation that the Movement had failed to provide.

This lack of compassion, of course, judged the American public severely, as being morally deficient in general. Instead of appreciating the moves many people were making away from support of the Vietnam war, the Movement made those outside feel they were not doing enough, that they were on a morally lower plane, and that Movement people could barely tolerate them.

The New Right picked up on this. Agnew and Nixon nationally, and Reagan in California were successful in branding the Movement as "elitist." In some fundamental way they were right — even though this was an incredible manipulation to cover the way that the real elites of wealth and power were suddenly masking themselves as champions of the common citizen. But the move worked. Nixon ran TV ads showing a construction worker, far above the crowd, thinking out loud about how he resented the way these elites seemed to treat him with disrespect.

The New Right tactic worked most powerfully when the right linked its charge of elitism to the way the left had made fun of religion, moral values, and family life.

In each case, the New Left had started from a valid critique: religion had been used as an opiate; moral values were used to induce guilt, to keep people from exploring their own directions for achieving pleasure and satisfaction in their lives, and to tie people to oppressive life situations; families had indeed been oppressive to women. But in each case the New Left failed to understand the other side of the picture, the positive side of these traditional values. New Leftists refused to listen to what people themselves said about their attachment to these values.

Had they listened, the New Leftists would have discovered that there were rational elements in the American public's ties to "traditional values." Yes, it was true that often the rational elements were contained within an irrational shell. But it was also true that what people were aspiring to was basically decent and hardly to be dismissed out of hand.

THE MOST IMPORTANT issues involving "traditional values" centered around the family. Americans want the family to be strong not because they wish to oppress other people, or because males and adults long to tyrannize women or children, but because family is an ideal that represents their hopes for loving and caring relationships. Had New Leftists, and later the women's movement, been able to understand this concern, they might have picked up the banner of family, and created a pro-family movement of their own.

I myself tried to do this after the Reagan victory of 1980. Together with an impressive assortment of progressive leaders, we created a coalition called Friends of Families. We argued that family life was being undermined by contemporary society, and that fundamental structural changes would be necessary to strengthen family life. We pointed to the stress that people experience in work, a direct result of their powerlessness to control any aspect of their production, and the way that stress was brought home into families where it erupted into family violence when not deflected by alcohol, drugs, or emotional withdrawal. We called for a humanizing of the work

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world, and for support groups for families, for a new definition of the family which would recognize the actual diversity of family forms, for an expansion of child-care, housing, employment, and for the full equality of power and respect for women both within the family and within the larger society.

Some of our specifics were already part of the program of the liberal forces. But our justification was quite different. We were not calling for "fairness" as the ultimate value. The identification of liberals and progressives with a politics of "fairness" and "rights" has severe limitations. The underlying premises often reinforce the idea of each person as an isolated individual and cut against the widespread desire for "community." What gets lost is the essential truth that human beings are fundamentally in relationship, not isolated monads. We were saying, in effect, that we shared the same values that the right claimed to represent — and that made it appealing to millions of Americans who were not at heart sympathetic to conservative politics. The implicit assertion that long-term, committed loving relationships are something of ultimate value was to be a basis for our political programs.

This was not a call for opportunistically jumping on the family bandwagon. Our approach called for a whole new way of articulating a progressive political vision. We argued for remaking societal institutions so that they would foster mutual caring, community, and equality of respect. In addition, we realized that a family-oriented progressive politics would have much to learn from the religious world. The notion of the sacred makes possible a deeper framework for loving and committed relationships than any provided so far by the secular humanist world.

The New Right immediately caught the importance of such a challenge. At their invitation, I debated New Right leader Paul Weyrich at the Moral Majority's annual convention in 1982. The right was incensed that progressives would try to enter "their" turf and address one of their most important selling points.

Equally incensed was the left, represented most articulately by national leader of the Democratic Socialists of America Barbara Ehrenreich. Writing in the March 13, 1982 edition of *The Nation*, Ehrenreich said that the impulses that propel people towards a pro-family perspective "are nasty ones: misogyny, racism, sexual repressiveness, and a punitive attitude toward young people." With such an attitude, both New Leftists and feminists were unwilling to accept the proposals of Friends of Families and saw them as a sell-out to patriarchy and oppression. On the other hand, leadership of the labor movement saw it as too risky: quality of life issues, I was told in a meeting at Lane Kirkland's office in 1982, would be a can of worms, and "we can beat them just on the economic issues when Reaganomics collapses."

The myopia was astonishing. Ehrenreich went on to write that judging from the polls which then showed overwhelming support for the ERA and abortion rights, her own already mobilized constituency "is far larger than anything the pro-family movement can muster." How hollow that sounds today. If only the women's movement had been able to separate itself in the popular mind from the arrogance and elitism of those who made so many other women in America feel scorned, rather than liberated, by feminism. And yet, even today, those who oppose a progressive pro-family perspective are given credence as women's movement spokespeople. (To be fair, a few leading feminists responded enthusiastically to our approach — although they were never able to bring their organizations to take a lead in creating this coalition.)

How sad, as well, for millions of union members that their leadership is stuck in a style of articulating issues that excludes the human needs so deeply addressed by Christian revivalist and born-again movements, albeit in distorted forms. The idea that unions should care about the spiritual, ethical, and emotional concerns of their membership, and that union meetings should be reconstructed to emphasize education, politics, and emotional solidarity, remains foreign and suspect to labor movement leaders who continually insist that all their members care about are the small wage hikes the union in any event can no longer deliver. They remain blind to the fact that these same members fill the churches and often vote for the political right — even when so voting runs against their economic interests.

The need to change the public image of the labor and women's movements must be seen as part of a wider and deeper need to reframe all of liberal and progressive politics. Liberals and progressives, both within the Democratic party and in the various independent projects and movements, must start with a repudiation of the moral arrogance of the past, and assert their recognition that the aspirations of most Americans are for quite decent goals and ends. The new politics must commit itself to a single, easily understood goal: the desire to create a society in which love prevails and moral values are predominant, in which the economy and politics reject the me-firstism and self-centeredness of contemporary capitalism by putting in its place a society based on mutual caring, love, and cooperation. In the name of that goal, progressive forces can shape a pro-family program, an economic program, and a political program.

THE CENTRAL FEATURE of such a politics would be compassion — compassion for all of us, left and right, who have not been able to create as good a world as we want and need. That compassion can start with compassion for our own failures in the past, but it must be extended equally to those on the right who choose paths we still think are mistaken. Without in any way compromising our critique of the content of right-wing politics, we should approach the people who have moved to the political right in constant awareness of our shared humanity. From the Christian community we could learn the essential notion that we are all sinners — not as an excuse for future wrongdoing, but as an approach that starts with understanding that we are all one in this enterprise of trying to create a decent society.

I fear that this is a very difficult step to ask of our leaders in the Democratic party, the labor movement, the women's movement. Instead, it will be much easier to explain the defeat

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in 1984 once again as the other guy's fault: the irrationality or stupidity of the American public. We will hear endless cries of woe, and be invited to attend endless conferences allegedly to rethink politics which end up being restatements of the same tired ideas and arenas for the next set of leaders to jockey for position so that they can give us reruns with more attractive faces in 1988.

IT IS THE GENIUS of Ronald Reagan and his advisors that they understood what was really at stake in 1984. The validation that America is "o.k." was the central message of the Reagan campaign's mass psychology. It was a message that speaks to a very deep need in the American people, to feel better about themselves. It was not, as the progressives would like to pretend, merely an appeal to thoughtless patriotism (watch how carefully, for example, Reagan kept his belligerent intentions towards Central America out of the news until after he had won reelection). It was rather addressed to the deep feelings that so many people have about themselves: that they are not o.k., that their lives are a mess, that they have messed things up.

As a therapist I am very aware of the ways that people contribute to and intensify their own unhappiness and powerlessness. But I am also aware of the ways that people unfairly blame themselves for aspects of their personal life that are failing precisely because of an irrational and humanly destructive social environment. A progressive movement that helped people understand this interaction would be a movement that could once again be respected and trusted by Americans. Imagine a movement helping people see how family problems are often the product of competitive and stress-producing tensions in the larger society. Imagine political ads that talked about why children so often adopt the values of the marketplace and reject those of the family. Imagine political ads that talked about the way the "I'm-going-to-get-mine" mentality of contemporary Reaganism undermines our sense of loyalty in relationships. Or imagine unions and liberal organizations sponsoring support groups in which people could learn skills to improve communication and trust within their families. Helping to counteract the irrational self-blaming that people engage in would be a first step toward building the kind of consciousness and trust enabling people to consider other aspects of a program for serious social change.

A first step only; because if the liberals and progressives could ever get to the point where people would again be willing to listen, a point which I believe can only be reached when the anti-family, anti-values, and anti-religious perspectives are dumped in favor of the psychological approach I advocate above, then there still needs to be something substantive to say. In this regard, the economic policies of liberals no longer make sense. The implicit argument of the right wing goes something like this (though they don't use this particular language): "We are in a period where American capitalism is under pressure from rival capitalist systems. There is increasing appeal for corporations to lower their costs by leaving behind the U.S. work force and internationalizing their productive operations. Capitalists will only invest their monies where they have the best chance of making a buck, and they are willing to abandon all of us if they don't receive adequate support and encouragement. Government must be seen as their ally, not as an antagonist restricting their profits, regulating their methods of operation, or constraining their ability to do what they think is in their own best interest."

To this, the liberals' policy of humanizing capitalism by restraining the worst offenses and trying to put bandages on the parts of society most severely hurt by the irrationalities of an unplanned competitive system seems worse than naive — it seems to miss the boat entirely.

If capitalist managers retain all power to make investment decisions; if they remain free to move their capital and productive operations at will to sections of the country or the world where workers can be paid less or more easily pushed around; if they can literally cause recession by their negative reactions or over-reactions to liberal moves to curb their worst excesses, then it really is irrational to make them angry. It makes more sense to follow the conservatives in saying that we had better give them whatever it takes to make them feel happy. Or, alternatively — and the alternative is, I think, the only logical one — we must go the full distance, and project a politics that calls for democratic planning of investments and restrictions on capitalists and corporations to move money or resources abroad. This is not some wishy-washy "investments" policy that gets the government involved in running those sectors of the economy that can't make it on their own. Rather, it is a clear-cut offensive against the right of a relatively small number of capitalists to make decisions that affect everyone without democratic participation in those decisions.

Here, too, the moral and religious commitment must speak louder than any bureaucratic fumbling. We need a political offensive that speaks in broad terms about a loving society and its needs. We don't need talk of another government board or bureaucracy — but rather a vision of a different set of priorities. If this is perceived as just another liberal tinkering with an established distribution of power and wealth that no one wants to challenge, it will fail. People are too smart to take a few steps to the left. They either want to go far enough so that they can actually win — i.e. not have to face high unemployment and inflation because the corporations are upset with us — or not go that route at all.

WE NEED to understand the fundamental rationality of people. It is not because they are self-destructive that they vote for candidates who support the interests of the status quo. It is because they understand that unless that power is fundamentally transformed, they had better play ball with those who have it. Progressive economics makes less sense than Reaganomics — unless progressives are willing to raise a vision of a fundamentally different allocation of power.

This, then, is the political direction for a successful progressive politics: first, acknowledgment of past elitism, rejection of it, and a new attitude of compassion and understanding about the emotional needs of the American people; second,

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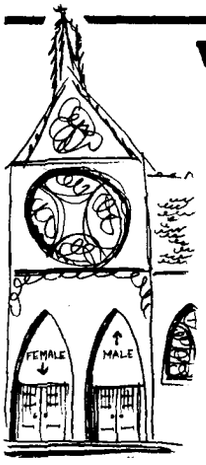
development of a progressive pro-family perspective, acceptance of religious and ethical values, and reframing of our program in terms of those values; and third, a clear move towards democratization of the economy as the only economically serious response for America in the next two decades. The left cannot sit around bemoaning how stupid everyone is, alternating between moments of gloom in which it repeats the view that people are just fundamentally racist, sexist, or imperialist, and moments of hope in which it produces new fantasies to replace the "gender gap," "new registrants," the belief that "the poor will finally speak out," and faith that "middle-income workers know they are being hurt" — all those illusions of the 1984 season.

In today's climate, the right will continue to grow. Not because its programs work or make sense (indeed, people will certainly express their upset at specific failures in the 1986 elections by voting for more Democrats in Congress), but because they tap the underlying deep issues the liberals and progressives continue to ignore. With no one to challenge them on these issues, and with no one to take up the powerful energies that the movements of the 1960s engaged but ultimately dissipated, Reagan's victory can only lead to a further consolidation of the right, and a further demoralizing of those who have struggled so long for peace and justice. In such a period, many people will increasingly give up on politics because they mistake the American public's rejection of the Democrats for a more general and deeper conservatism than really exists. As long as the liberals and progressives fail to adopt a more sophisticated psychological policy, and a deeper understanding of the needs that lead people to family, religion, and moral values, they condemn themselves to relative impotence and political suicide.



WOMEN & THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

From immigrants to emigrants

MARY JO WEAVER

WHEN WE LOOK at the history of American Catholicism, it is easy to miss the women: they seldom appear in the books, and most American Catholics can name no more than four important women in the history of their church. It might be argued that American Catholic history has been written with a clerical bias which misses laypeople in general, but a careful counting of men and women will show that while lay *men* are few and far between, women are invisible.

It could be argued that most of the histories I'm referring to were written before the current wave of the women's movement, therefore, their omissions due to invincible ignorance, ought to be judged mercifully. Yet, look at James Hennesey's *American Catholics* [Oxford, $19.95] and see that fewer than 50 of the nearly 1300 index items refer to women in any way, and in 331 pages of text, the material about women adds up to approximately 10 pages. The real story might be in the bicentennial volume edited by Robert Trisco, *Catholics in America 1776-1976* [ABC, Clio, $29.85]: it includes only 6 essays on women out of 60, and 41 index items out of 431. More revealing, however, since one picture is worth a thousand words, are the photographs: of the 60 photographs included in this handsome volume, 30 of them are men, 7 are women, and the rest are buildings or political cartoons. Significantly, buildings outnumber the women by a margin of 2 to 1.

Women are the "immigrants" of contemporary American Catholicism. Like those who came to America in the nineteenth century, they are many, in great need of support, and quite capable of being "lost" to the church unless some special care is taken to identify with them and enter their process of "assimilation" and empowerment. Like those whose contributions were ignored in the twentieth century — Hispanics and blacks, for example — women have, by virtue of their unique perspective, important gifts which the church as a whole cannot afford to ignore without seriously impoverishing itself.

Since statistics about American Catholics and upward social mobility mask the ways in which American Catholic women experience discrimination, my analogy to the immigrant situation might help to clarify the issues. European Catholics came to this country a century ago because it was the land of equal opportunity, but they quickly found that the mythology of America far outstripped the realities of their lives. Similarly, women in the church, told that they are made in the image of God, with men equally redeemed and valued, discover that biblical promises of equality are "spiritualized," meant to describe heavenly rewards rather than earthly realities.

If work is a central category for defining what it means to be human, our immigrant ancestors found their humanity de-

MARY JO WEAVER, *associate professor of religious studies at Indiana University, is completing a book about the women's movement and the Catholic church.*

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scribed in low-paying, low-status jobs. They were in the curious position of being absolutely necessary — to build the Holland Tunnel in New York City, for example — yet were valued and treated as totally useless. Their places of work were dismal, their services taken-for-granted, and their contributions pushed to the background. Like the Orientals in the photographs of the historic linking of the transcontinental railroad, they were often "erased" before publication, denied recognition for their work. Women in the church can identify with all these things: they have the low-paying, low-status jobs within the church and within the society-at-large. Their usual place of work — the home — is rhetorically valued as being the heart of the country, yet the trivialization of their work in that place treats it and them as useless. And they have been erased or ignored in the recountings of the American Catholic story. Like the immigrants of the twentieth century, women are consistently treated as auxiliaries rather than given power and an effective voice.

The transformative experience for nineteenth-century immigrants was the labor movement. The American Catholic church did not lose its working classes *because* the leaders of the church stood with them, fought for them, and made their struggles an integral part of American Catholic identity. The church in Europe (especially in France) which was identified with the aristocracy, lost its working-class members. We can ask if today's church leaders are too identified with patriarchal structures to support the women's movement? I do not think it strains my analogy to predict that if the American Catholic hierarchy does not support its women, it will lose them just as surely as the French church lost its laboring classes. In order to support the American labor movement, Catholic bishops sometimes had to fight against Roman officials and for values that were not — so it seemed — compatible with Catholicism. The challenges voiced by American Catholic women put church officials on the horns of a similar dilemma.

Second-class citizenship is experienced by Catholic women in several ways. Laywomen in ministry, sisters in politics, and the Women's Ordination Conference all point to significant and severe tensions within the present framework. The future of American Catholicism hangs, in part, on how well those tensions are resolved.

The CARA study on "Women and Ministry" sponsored by the Leadership Council of Women Religious found a remarkably high number of laywomen in parish ministry in the United States. I do not want to argue here about the merits of the study itself; it clearly has problems of design and definition, but they do not impede the points I wish to raise. What are these laywomen in ministry doing? They are *volunteering* their services to a church in need: 92 percent of them work for no pay whatsoever, and of the 8 percent who get paid, precious few earn more than $10,000 a year (13 percent); 67 percent of those paid earn less than $5,000 a year. These women are from the middle and upper middle classes. They are, by and large, involved in religious education and liturgical ministry, i.e., they fill the spaces left by sisters and priests. It is significant, I think, that two-thirds of the women in the sample are over forty: they were reared in the pre-Vatican II church where they were taught subservience and "helping Father" along with arithmetic and geography. They have embraced the spirit of Vatican II, but they are not usually feminists. Since their voice is heard only when it agrees with the status quo, it is hard for church leaders to hear any dissonance. But, will a new generation of women continue to tolerate this benign exploitation? I doubt that we will continue to see great numbers of women eager or able to work for low pay and to have no power. Women in the future will probably make more demands for change and status in the church. They will also rearrange the gestalt of American Catholic practice so the people will expect, perhaps even demand, that women take more active and more powerful roles. By being where they are now and beginning to think in different terms, laywomen are able to ask major questions about women's *roles* in the church.

Sisters, on the other hand, especially those politically active, are in a position to ask major questions about church *structures*. Their recent tussles with Vatican officials make it clear that the definition and future of "religious life" are at stake here. When we realize that the competing definitions of "religious life" are really reflective of competing ecclesiologies, we can see how important it is to be aware of the controversies between politically active sisters and the Vatican. There are several ways of understanding the conflict. On the one hand it is an argument between the old and the new, where the old understanding of religion is Durkheim's and the new one is Rahner's. Durkheim once defined religion as "having to do with sacred things, that is, things set apart and forbidden." Rahner, on the other hand, assessing the impact of Vatican II, said, "we are in a transition from a 'western' church to a 'world' church" in which, presumably, there will be a plurality of proclamations, different conceptual frameworks and contexts, a plurality of theologies, liturgies, ecclesiastical practices, and a plurality of political evaluations based on the Gospel. From another angle, the conflict is the pre-Vatican II church "putting the brakes on" the post-Vatican II church (to choose a metaphor offered a few years ago by Andrew Greeley). Finally, it is a profound argument about power: new concepts of religious life are democratic where the Vatican is hierarchical; the "new nuns" are feminists, aware of the need for and value of shared power, while the Vatican is patriarchal, convinced of the need for and value of clearly-defined "superiors."

MANY AMERICAN Catholic sisters have come to read the Gospel primarily as a mandate for social justice which has led them to a different way of looking at "religious life." Its essence is not the old-fashioned concept of being set apart in enclosed space, wearing "religious garb," but is understood as life among the marginalized. Seeing themselves called to solidarity with the downtrodden, many of them have joined centers which educate, research, and struggle for systemic justice. With a heightened consciousness of global injustices they are prepared to engage in boycotts, demonstrations, and lobbying activities. Many of them, believing in grass-roots

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involvement, have entered the political arena as mayors, state congresspersons, and legal officials.

The new code of Canon Law, Pope John Paul II's letter to the American bishops (April 3, 1983) and the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes document "The Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life" (May 31, 1983) show how disturbing these new nuns are to the Vatican. For Roman officials, "religious life" is set apart from the world, lived in "canonically erected" communities, distinguished by "religious garb" and presided over by a superior. Frequently-repeated themes of dependence, authority, obedience, and surrender should disturb *us* as American Catholics for they signal a clear return to mentalities and policies of yesterday. They are aimed at women because women are perceived as being in the most vulnerable position; but they are really aimed at all of us who have supported the direction of the American Catholic church in the last twenty years. Whereas the document from SCRIS says that "religious life" cannot be lived "in the world," American sisters and many American Catholics insist that religion is precisely embodied in the tensions and opportunities of daily existence.

The values adopted by many of these sisters are pluralistic ones and feminist ones which challenge the way religious influence operates in a society. In adopting feminist values of collective learning and collegial process, American Catholic women challenge the very modus operandi traditionally used by Catholics in political situations, viz., decree. If traditional Catholicism is willing to be political only through the directives of popes and bishops, American Catholic women are constrained to add many more voices to the discussion. In doing that, they will change the future of American Catholicism, making it clear, perhaps, that revolutionary political movements themselves are the locus of divine disclosure. Vatican displeasure with these women, as with liberation theologians, is rooted in a hierarchical ecclesiology and a fear of losing control.

Sisters in political office are troublesome to church officials because they are less "controllable" through normal channels, and because they have learned dangerous strategies. In the last two decades, through their political activism, sisters have learned to use the power of the media. Add this to what they already know from experience of the networking possibilities of community life and we have an extremely volatile situation. The best illustration of the media power of American Catholic nuns occurred in 1982 when sisters from the National Coalition of American Nuns not only publicly opposed the Hatch Amendment (in opposition to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops), but went on the Phil Donahue show to publicize their decision. The NCAN statement was not the first to come from a Catholic source: Catholics for a Free Choice and Catholic Alternatives had both been vocal on the subject of abortion for the better part of a decade; the National Assembly of Religious Women issued a statement in 1983 reiterating their 1977 position in support of equal access of all women to the law and opposing the Hatch Amendment and "any further constitutional amendments aiming at making abortion a crime again." But, Catholics for a Free Choice is made up, for the most part, of laity who cannot be silenced very effectively by Catholic authorities; and NARW's position published in their newsletter, while significant, was not particularly public. It probably reached no more than several hundred people. The NCAN statement, however, coupled with an appearance on a popular national television show, was wildly newsworthy and drew Vatican opprobrium. It was also instructive: of the 540 responses received to the show, 355 (66 percent) were positive and 185 (34 percent) were negative, reflective of Gallup Poll statistics. Most of those who wrote were women, and as Ann Patrick Ware pointedly mentioned in her analysis of the responses, "not one mentioned a single case where the church was of any help. People *did* tell of receiving comfort and understanding from their women friends, their mothers, their married relatives, but clearly they did not consider these friendly voices 'church.' "

If Catholic feminists have one agreed-upon agenda it is to challenge the church's structures. The post-Vatican II slogan of the laity — "We are the church" — expressed both a surge of power felt by the laity in the sixties and a reaction against the ecclesiological model which identified the church with the clergy. "We are the church" has now been taken up by American Catholic women for the same reasons: as a reaction against the patriarchal model of church, and to express the power women feel as they refuse to be marginalized or squeezed out of the community. Many women, of course, perceive sexism in the church to be intractable and so they leave the institution in search of alternative communities of support and celebration. Women under forty are leaving the church in significantly high numbers, and highly disproportionate to men in the same age category. As William McCready of the National Opinion Research Center says, "Women are voting with their feet: they're leaving." Those who remain within the system do not gloss over the realities of sexism within the church nor do they feel particularly sanguine about them; their strategy, however, is to remain with the institution as subversives within a corrupt society. One organized symbol of this resistance thinking is the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC). It has grown from a small, grass-roots-inspired inquiry about ordination into a national coalition of committed feminists capable of challenging the nature of the priesthood and the future of "traditional" Catholicism.

I do not want to debate here about the merits of the case for ordination. The unflappable logic of oversimplification — "it has never been done, therefore, it never can be done" — has raised a storm of protest from world-class theologians and has exposed the Vatican declaration against the ordination of women as a shabby bit of work. I do want to say, however, that women are in the front lines of a broader struggle; the denial of ordination to women is another way of saying that the American enthusiasm for the post-Vatican II church has gone too far. The willingness of the authors of the Vatican declaration to ignore ecumenical dialogue, the sound research of liturgists, and the considered opinion of its major theologians should

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give us a clue about what Rome thinks of the future of American Catholicism.

WOC challenges traditional Catholicism by its processes, its ability to build effective networks, and its willingness to participate in acts of ecclesiastical disobedience. Like other feminist organizations within the church, WOC operates on a collegial basis; in perceiving the strength and value of the collective, it sees the dangers and divisiveness of the patriarchal model. It is becoming increasingly clear that women's groups not only operate differently within themselves, but have been moved, on the basis of their experience, to challenge the hierarchical model as ineffective and illegitimate.

While early feminist activity centered around the issue of ordination, it did not stop there: since WOC began in 1976, American Catholic women have moved to "Womanchurch," a gathering of the "ecclesia of women" formed to affirm our position in the center of the Jesus traditions. In the pre-Vatican II church it may have been possible to marginalize women seeking ordination or alternative ecclesiastical expressions, to stigmatize them by decree, and to silence their voices with clear inquisitorial strategies. Today, however, thanks to the theoretical work of theologians — Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Anne Carr, Margaret Farley, and others — and to the networking skills of groups like NCAN, NARW, Network, Chicago Catholic Women, LCWR, WOC, and others, women will not be marginalized. Women claim the right to gather as "Womanchurch" and to state their aims clearly. As a grass-roots movement, Womanchurch has not yet received the publicity it deserves. But it is growing, and its interest in spirituality is both feminist and political. A spirituality which has no political connections is, to Womanchurch, inadequate: women have seen the prophetic/liberationist message of the Gospel and will not return to the "set-apart," interiorizing piety of yesterday. Further, a church which does not enable women's leadership and which operates in a hierarchical way is intolerable. Finally, a church which will not permit its women to celebrate the Eucharist makes no sense. Willing to find new centers of spiritual expression and ritual, women are gathering together to celebrate the Eucharist themselves in direct disobedience to church regulations.

Many of us remember the neat splits of the pre-Vatican II church: the church and the world, the secular and the sacred, laity and "religious." These made it possible to compartmentalize our religion. Since the council, we have reduced if not obliterated the distinctions between the secular and the sacred so that the religious task today has moved from finding God in sacred space to following the example of Jesus in our troubled world. With ecumenically-raised consciousnesses many of us believe that God can be found almost anywhere — in the cries of the poor, the example of the Buddha, and the traditions of the church. The women's movement in the American Catholic church calls us to see the divine as it is present in the struggles of women. Already in this century the American church has ignored the specific gifts of its black and Hispanic members: our liturgies, processes, and perceptions would be much richer had we not operated in racist, discriminatory ways within the church. While there is some evidence that American Catholicism is beginning (just beginning) to take its Hispanic population seriously as a source of talent and insight, I suspect our willingness to do that is directly related to the great numbers of Hispanic Catholics now in the United States.

We have an opportunity *now* to take to heart the gifts of women in the church: their experience with collective process, their abilities to find and celebrate the feminine dimensions of the divine, and their own experience as a clear, first-world locus for understanding the dynamics of liberation theology. The discontent of many women is growing slowly but surely. Like the labor movement in the nineteenth century, the contemporary women's movement is vilified by conservatives who find that feminist values are "inconsistent" with Catholicism; yet, the values of Catholic feminists include pluralism of voices, direct participation by women in the governance and celebratory activity of the church, a truly collegial church process, and a clear mandate to continue to follow the dynamism of Vatican II. Whether those values are important to Curial officials or not, they are important to Americans.

We can see the story of our lives written in the struggles of the immigrants. Can we see the story of our future in the struggles of our women?

Elisabeth Murawski

The Octogenarians

These women speak to themselves.
They have stopped cooking their meals.
In the dark daylight they save on electric bills.
They look for letters and pray,
in harsh voices that can be overheard,
for their survivors. They are past
annoyance at the noise of children.
They have electric ears they forget to use.

These women read the large-type versions
of Reader's Digest and the Bible, hand-magnify
the news. A blaring radio takes the place of TV.
They have lost all their favorite shows,
gained wardrobes of slippers and sweaters,
nightgowns and robes. They return,
to the children who have moved,
pictures and yearbooks, forgotten souvenirs.

By all that is holy, these women corner
the listener, fill the air with woes
respectful of their age. They stand on balconies
looking down through the haze
on white trellises, climbed trees. Their windows
creak open to the sun. They prod with gnarled fingers
both rose and thorn and come away smitten by touch,
their swollen hearts slowed to a footfall, a muffled drum.

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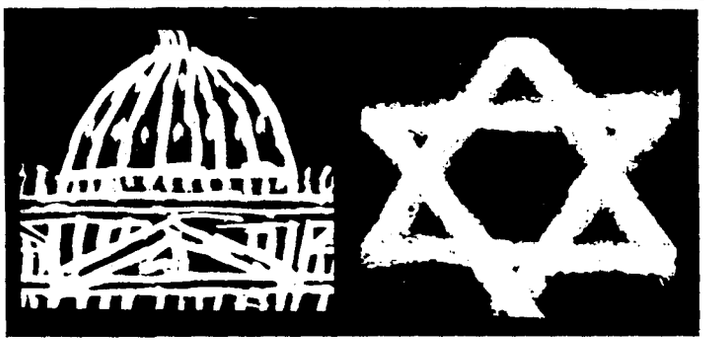

ROME LOOKS AT JERUSALEM

The pope & Israel

EUGENE J. FISHER

A MAJOR STATEMENT by Pope John Paul II has yet to receive the full attention it is due. This is the pope's 1984 Good Friday apostolic letter *Redemptionis Anno*, which is devoted to "the fate of the Holy City," Jerusalem, the capital of the reborn Jewish state of Israel.

To understand the pope's message in this letter, one needs to understand it as a spiritual challenge, and not merely as a political statement. Likewise, one needs to read it within the context of the many statements on Christian-Jewish relations and the Middle East issued by the Holy See and bishops' conferences throughout the world since the promulgation almost two decades ago by the Second Vatican Council of the now famous declaration on the Jews, *Nostra Aetate*, no. 4.

These statements, too numerous to be listed here, tell the story of a true *teshuvah*, a turning on the part of Christianity regarding its understanding of Jews and Judaism, toward an understanding that acknowledges with respect and affirmation how the Jewish people views itself as a people. In this vein, the bishops of the United States declared in 1975:

> In dialogue with Christians, Jews have explained that they do not consider themselves as a church, a sect, or a denomination, as is the case among Christian communities, but rather as a peoplehood that is not solely racial, ethnic, or religious, but in a sense a composite of all these. It is for such reasons that an overwhelming majority of Jews see themselves bound in one way or another to the land of Israel. Most Jews see this tie to the land as essential to their Jewishness.
>
> What difficulties Christians may experience in sharing this view, they should strive to understand this link between land and people which Jews have expressed in their writings and worship throughout two millennia as a longing for the homeland, holy Zion.

One can see here, as well as in parallel Protestant statements, the development within church circles of an appreciation for the link between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, as well as between the Jewish people and Jerusalem. This appreciation is especially apparent in the statements of the present pope. In a homily on the Hill of Martyrs in Otranto, Italy on October 3, 1980, Pope John Paul II explicitly linked the foundation of the state of Israel with the tragedy of the Holocaust: "the Jewish people, after tragic experiences connected with the extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the state of Israel."

Redemptionis Anno, in this context, should be taken very seriously as an official acknowledgment and affirmation of the existence of the state of Israel. The pope writes:

> For the Jewish people who live in the state of Israel, and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies to their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquillity that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society.

This, then, is an entirely unambiguous statement of recognition on the part of the Holy See regarding the state of Israel. It puts into proper perspective the separate question of the precise level of diplomatic relations to be maintained between the government of the state of Israel and the Holy See. The issue of the level of diplomatic relations — whether on the highest, *nuncio* level, or, as now, on the lower level of regular diplomatic contacts — is a relatively minor one, though admittedly of larger symbolic importance within the Jewish community.

It should not be forgotten, of course, that diplomatic relations do exist between the two. The popes have numerous times received prime ministers, presidents, and foreign ministries of Israel, and always arranged and recorded these specifically as visits of state. So the *de jure* as well as *de facto* status of the Holy See/Israel relationship is clear. Nor should it be forgotten, as a part of the overall context of *Redemptionis Anno*, that Pope John Paul II was one of the first (and one of the few) international leaders to voice strong support for the Camp David agreements, stating that the pact "formalizes peace between two countries after decades of war and tension, and gives decisive impulse to the peace process in the entire region of the Middle East." Note the phrase: "two *countries*." Again, no ambiguity is allowed.

On this latter occasion, as in the homily at Otranto and indeed, in *Redemptionis Anno*, the pope spoke supportingly also of "the Palestinian Arabs, who are waiting rightly for a just and adequate solution to their pressing needs." "No people," he added, "can be sacrificed to the destiny of others." The pope does not here, or elsewhere, offer a specific

EUGENE J. FISHER *is the executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.*

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political formula for meeting those very real and urgent needs of Palestinian Arabs, urging rather a negotiated settlement acceptable to the relevant groups in the area itself, so long as this does not endanger the security of Israel. A wide range of options, such as put forth by various parties in Israel and elsewhere, is thus left open by Vatican policy. Statements of the Vatican, it is worth noting, consistently use the more general term "homeland" with reference to the Palestinian Arabs, while speaking of Israel as a "nation" or "state." This does not preclude the possibility of the creation of a third state out of the original Palestinian Mandate, but it does allow for a wider range of creative options to be negotiated by the affected parties themselves.

Redemptionis Anno likewise contains some of the strongest papal language concerning the relationship between the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. The pope emphasizes, for example, that "before it was the City of Jesus . . . Jerusalem was the historic site of the biblical revelation of God, the meeting place, as it were, of heaven and earth, in which more than in any other place the word of God was brought to humanity." This statement, in the context of the Catholic church's official acknowledgment of the ongoing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people, is an extremely significant one. It acknowledges both the particularity of the Jewish relationship with Jerusalem, and the universal significance of that Jewish particularity — for Christians no less than for Jews.

The pope, in *Redemptionis Anno*, is not content, as some have been, with the simple phrase that all three Abrahamic faiths — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — hold Jerusalem to be holy. This is true. But the pope describes in turn the *uniqueness* of the relationship each religious tradition has with Jerusalem. Regarding the Jewish attachment, he recognizes both the religious and the historic "peoplehood" dimension of Jewish attachment to Jerusalem:

> Jews ardently love her, and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation.

Consider the powerful phrase "as the capital," and the even stronger declaration "sign of their nation." Given the sacramental orientation of Roman Catholic thought, my understanding of this text and the concept of "sign" enunciated there is that it has deep spiritual significance.

Redemptionis Anno, of course, is by no means hestitant to set forth the stake that the church itself has in Jerusalem, not only in access to its holy places for pilgrimage, but also in the viability of its character as religiously pluralist, specifying Muslim along with Jewish and Christian reverence for the city. *Redemptionis Anno* thus affirms the religious and communal rights of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the city, rights which are already acknowledged and affirmed by the wise administration of Mayor Teddy Kolleck.

A final clarification is necessary for the record. Many, perhaps especially in the Jewish community, have criticized the Holy See and *Redemptionis Anno* on the basis of their interpretation of it as calling for the "internationalization of Jerusalem." I would like to lay this misunderstanding to rest once and for all. Until 1967, the year in which Israel took over the city, the Holy See did in fact offer support for the idea of internationalization as it was presented in the United Nations (and rejected by all Arab parties). Beginning in 1968, however, the Holy See began to speak a very different language. The policy now is to support some form of international law, or statute regarding the religiously pluralist character of the city since "not only the sacred places, but the whole historical Jerusalem and the existence of religious communities, their situation and future, cannot but affect everyone and interest everyone." The Holy See, simply put, has no strict policy on *who* should hold sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem, though it does have a clear and quite useful set of principles that would apply to any group holding sovereignty.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims must, in the pope's vision, come to terms with each other for the sake of the higher duty to which all are called. Jerusalem is the fulcrum of that encounter. Together, the three monotheistic traditions, meeting in Jerusalem, can give vivid testimony to the One God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, whom we all serve. This is the essential challenge given in *Redemptionis Anno*. Turning that vision into reality will not be easy. Nor is it without complexities, ambiguities, and risks when we descend from the level of vision to day-to-day realities. But it *is* possible. And our faith resides in the insight, nurtured by the Jewish prophets, the rabbis, and the Christian saints, that the merely possible can become the real.

Screen

SPACED OUT

THEY CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

IF YOU'VE BEEN watching the televised sky shows lately, you would think the space shuttle designers had copied *2001*. Real astronauts tether out in zero-G, trekking the soft black edge of outer space, their silver spacesuits hermetically sealed against the void. It all brings back Stanley Kubrick's images from his fictional spaceship *Discovery*. The only thing the NASA productions need is music by Richard Strauss. Thus art forecasts life.

Well, not quite. In reality our probes into space probably involve some unpoetic mix of science, commerce, and weaponry — in short, the same old earth, aloft. Science fiction has always looked for something wildly different, something exuberantly out of the ordinary and beyond our mundane compromises: extraterrestrial life, cosmic disaster, or spiritual deliverance. Unfortunately, most science fiction — and the

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current holiday season of new films is no exception — never manages to convey a sense of real revelation; it remains stuck in three ruts — sentimentality, space fantasy, and stratospheric cops-and-robbers. Periodically, a new writer, or new director, brings to a genre like this a genuine revision of possibilities. Just as Arthur Penn gave us a "reinvented" Western in *Little Big Man*, Kubrick gave us a new vision of science fiction in *2001*.

Now that movie has a sequel. Judged on its own terms, *2010* is a (mostly) engrossing thriller, a standout among recent sci-fi movies. But judged — as it inevitably will be — by its famous predecessor, the film is a letdown. The virtues and the defects of *2010* are directly related. Packed with unusual action and a strong political message, it compels more interest and thought than the standard shootouts in the sky of *Dune* or *Star Wars*. As a result, however, it has none of *2001*'s sparse, spooky visual poetry and suggestiveness. *2010* is like Pope rewriting Homer.

Special effects, at least, live up to their name in *2010*, particularly the computerized re-creation of Jupiter for motion picture purposes using stills generated by the Voyager II fly-by. We are treated here to the giant Red Spot and its ominous, slow-motion, ammonia thunderstorms; the frozen moon Europa and volcanic Io; and finally Arthur Clarke's infamous black monolith beckoning "beyond." *2010* also graphically re-creates the perils of space odyssey in scenes involving the rescue of *2001*'s abandoned spacecraft, *Discovery*, spinning dizzily above Io's viscous red dust. Finally, *2010* contains a topical anti-war message: the rescue mission takes place aboard the *Leonev*, a Soviet craft with a mixed crew of Russians and Americans who maintain their cooperation even as a superpower confrontation threatens nuclear war. The Russian actors (some recognizable from *Moscow on the Hudson*) give the English screenplay a special spice, particularly Oleg Rudnick, with his dour, monosyllabic stolidity.

What is missing is Stanley Kubrick's eccentric genius. Arthur Clarke, Kubrick's collaborator for *2001*, wrote the story on which this sequel is based; he also stayed in close (computer) touch with Peter Hyams who wrote, directed, and produced *2010* — if nothing else, an epic labor. But Hyams has created a cluttered product, both visually and dramatically; too much happens, all of it spelled out in full. For example, as in *2001*, we hear a few bars of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, or a passage from Ligeti's *Requiem*, but in *2010* we are rushed into a new sequence of action, with no chance to let the music match the visual text, or, better still, match the silences of space. Moreover, *2010* provides answers which are far less interesting than the questions posed by *2001*; what we gain in clarity we lose ten times over in mystery and sublimity.

Worst of all, the tone of the film is neutered. For example, the computer HAL is reawakened here (remember his dying, pathetic recital of *Daisy* when disconnected in *2001*?). It turns out, we are told, that HAL was inaccurately programmed, and could not help turning murderer; he wasn't really meant, we are assured, as a lesson in how our tools inherit our defects. In *2010*, confronted with a moral choice, HAL becomes a regular Boy Scout, a distinctive degradation of his cool COBOL satanism.

The end of *2010*, moreover, involves a hokey message about peace, a literal *deus ex machina*, stolen straight from the fifties' sci-fi classic, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*; the only new element involves the speculative and spectacular astronomical idea that Jupiter, one day, might evolve into a second sun. Why do we persist in the sentimental myth that something up there will solve all our problems down here? In invoking it, *2010* becomes a liberal fairy tale, missing the grander dimensions of its original. Oh for a film that would really give us Jupiter and all its gas, just like the rainbow swirls in service station puddles. In reality, how awful the thing must smell!

DUNE AND *Starman* — two other big budget sci-fi films — provide major disappointments. *Dune* is pseudo-inventive; despite all its arcana it is basically nothing more than an old shoot-'em-up-plus-adolescent-rite-of-passage in outer space. Of course I must confess a prejudice: *Dune* is faithful to its source, Frank Herbert's 1965 "classic" novel that became a big hit in some quarters, a book I detested for its freakish gobbledygook and spurious spirituality. Basically, Herbert's strategy, imitated by *Dune*'s director David Lynch, is to hide a paucity of real invention behind a multiplicity of mumbo jumbo. Lynch formerly made *Elephant Man* and *Eraserhead*; in *Dune* he pursues the monstrous with a ghoulish revamping of *Star Wars*. The shoot-'em-up, for example, pits a hero named Paul Atreides (for epic's sake), in the "Luke Skywalker" role, against some boil-covered villains and their punk rock henchman. The two sides contest ownership of a desert planet whose arid soil contains "mélange," a super potent spice containing the secrets of life and that sort of thing. Mining the spice provokes the appearance of *Dune*'s only intriguing novelty: giant worms the size and appearance of Moby Dick.

On one level, there's just too much in *Dune*; but on a deeper level, not enough. The villains live in the city of Harakonnen, a seamy futuristic Pittsburgh; in other locales we get Moorish architecture, Venetian interiors, Victorian wood paneling, officials in Czarist Russian uniforms, punk sadists in gold plated briefs, some outer space guerrillas like rubberized Michelin men. The ads for *Dune* tell us it presents "a world beyond experience, beyond imagination": what *Dune* really gives us are bad dreams blended in a cuisinart. No wonder the secret spice was called mélange. Unfortunately the conglomeration of effects is created simply to tell us that pure-hearted young men and damsels will save the universe from evil meanies. The disproportion between machinery and moral content is cosmic.

ADVERTISED AS the "first science fiction love story," *Starman* begins with a cute premise: an extraterrestrial craft speeds toward earth as a result of an *invitation*, the recording and pictures placed aboard the Voyager II. But the extraterrestrial visitor is shot at as it enters American air space

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and, adding things up quickly, hides by cloning itself into the form of a young man recently dead (Jeff Bridges) after finding a lock of hair tenderly saved by his widow (Karen Allen).

Preferred by Columbia Pictures over *E.T.* several years ago, *Starman* is a Spielberg-type film without the Spielberg wit needed to redeem the romanticization of the stranger from far away. As the extraterrestrial's human "contact," the widow is first repelled by her resurrected "spouse"; but like Spielberg's sensitive human "contact" figures, she grows to see that the apparently dangerous alien is really a cutie pie with a heart of God-knows-what. The starman is equipped, of course, with E.T.'s holy, healing touch, and — lest we miss the religious theme — he makes love to the widow, previously barren, and promises her a *very* blessed *male* event.

Naturally, other earthlings don't understand the starman, a staple of sentimental sci-fi. Their malice necessitates a high-speed, cross-continent sequence of chase scenes as starman seeks a spaceship rendezvous at Crater Monument in Arizona — a dead-ringer for Devil's Tower in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. *Starman*, in short, is a derivative sci-fi film where we are supposed to learn the real enemy is ourselves — a half-truth, no doubt, but by this point, a twice-told tale.

SUPERGIRL is simply a sex-change operation. Once again a humanoid alien has to flee an endangered planet; once again he/she engages in high moral combat with the forces of evil, here personified by the evil witch, Selena, portrayed (how the mighty have fallen) by Faye Dunaway. But even Dunaway's thick and sometimes inspired campiness with the role cannot counteract the stupor the movie induces; it has none of the verve of the original *Superman*, typified by Lois Lane's memorable inquiry, meant to test Superman's X-ray vision, "What color is my underwear?" The screenplay leaves no room for such a question; there's no spunky character to balance the superhumanoid's relentless goodness from its *own* side of the good/evil divide. Supergirl herself, played by Helen Slater, is a cipher; the film is a bore.

Night of the Comet, on the other hand, inventively plays with the notion that Chicken Little was right. Here the sky yields neither bird nor plane but apocalyptic disaster when a comet provides earth all too close an encounter. The bulk of the film is a battle of survivors: young innocents versus cannibalistic mutants, a random punk rocker or two, and some government types who knew what was coming and now want to suck the blood of the other survivors to remain healthy.

But *Night of the Comet* dares no metaphorical message. Indeed, what gives zest to this B-movie update is the tackiness of the production. In my memory, it's the only sci-fi movie filmed primarily in back alleys, where it always looks like the end of the world. The rest of the set is downtown Los Angeles, and that locale's hollow glitz is another fit setting for Doomsday. Maybe that was the point: humanity does survive, even here; but the remnant is mostly a duo of lo-Cal Valley girls and two new Adams (or were they named Sean?).

In pleasant contrast, comedies — *Buckaroo Banzai* and *The Brother from Another Planet* — provide strong new sci-fi angles. *Buckaroo Banzai* is worth a look as the best of the end-of-the-world punk costume-drama visions pervading film, *MTV*, and even late night commercials lately: it's a hip Buck Rodgers, in red leather.

Buckaroo is whimsical, with deliberately wacky loose ends. *The Brother from Another Planet* is more substantial, a genial satire on contemporary racism. The hero of the film (and title character) is a black escaping via spacecraft from a planet still permitting official slavery. He lands in Harlem, blends in naturally, and begins to discover similarities and differences with his home. On a subway ride, for example, he is accosted by a frenetic card trickster who, after several high-speed sleights of hand, asks him simply, "Wanna see me make all the white people disappear?" When the train rolls into Columbus Circle, last stop on the express run till Harlem, and the announcer blares "125th Street next," Director John Sayles scores his heaviest point.

Brother from Another Planet isn't a perfect film, but its spirit is generous and its screenplay inventive; it also manages that rare artistic achievement, making goodness genuinely attractive. The brother is played by Joe Morton, who says nary a word in the film but speaks volumes through touch and gesture. The acting — and the whole style of the movie — is understated; dollar for dollar, it probably provides the best emotional value from a science fiction film in years.

TOM O'BRIEN

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Books: ABORTION: DIVISION & CONSENSUS

ABORTION AND THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD

Kristen Luker
University of California,
$14.95, 324 pp.

Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

PERHAPS better than any other book, Kristen Luker's *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* illuminates the conundrum that the abortion issue has raised in American politics. That is a bit of a surprise, since the book does not pretend to offer a political analysis, except in a final chapter discussing the future of the abortion debate. Nor are there any judgments, even implicit ones, about who's right and who's wrong among the 212 California pro-life and pro-choice activists interviewed for this book. (The book's scrupulous fairness must be unique for writing on this topic.) The social profiles Luker creates out of these interviews do go a long way, however, to explain the passions that feed the abortion debate.

Luker, a sociologist at the University of California, begins by providing a richly detailed description of the historical circumstances that have formed and forced the terms of the debate. She covers the territory from the physicians in the nineteenth century who first sought legal regulation of abortion as a matter of professional jurisdiction, to abortion reformers in the 1960s who provided referrals and counseling as a form of civil disobedience, to the Catholic mother and housewife who, reading a newspaper on January 23, 1973, was horrified as she began to comprehend the implications of *Roe* v. *Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that removed most legal restrictions on abortion.

This history provides background for Luker's analysis of the circumstances that reopened the question in the 1950s and 1960s. The medical profession, unable to resolve under professional rubrics the obvious disparities between legal limits and the actual practice of many physicians who performed abortions for an increasingly broad number of indications, began a quiet effort to "reform" abortion law. State legislatures were asked—Luker presents the case of California in depth—to clarify and enlarge the conditions for which physicians might legally perform abortions. These conditions included a broad definition of the mother's health and fetal indications (such as the deforming effects of Rubella). As she shows, these state-by-state efforts met an elite opposition that had little impact on the grass-roots Catholics who were ultimately mobilized by *Roe* v. *Wade* and organized the pro-life movement as we have come to know it.

More permissive laws in New York and California (where the modified reform bill was signed by then-Governor Reagan), were barely in place when the 1973 Supreme Court decision overturned the tightly balanced efforts of abortion reformers to write laws that provided specific strictures while permitting relatively easy access to early abortions. By this reading the Supreme Court decision probably did more than anything else to set off the political battle that has raged over the abortion issue for the last twelve years.

As Luker shows, the force of that political passion is fed not simply by a public policy allowing abortion-on-demand and by the disagreement over the moral status of the fetus, but also by the way that abortion has called into question the social importance of motherhood. To pro-life activists abortion "is a referendum on the place and meaning of motherhood." In their judgment abortion degrades the idea of motherhood and the social value of mothering. To pro-choice activists abortion is a means of ensuring control of child-bearing so as to allow women the same freedom as men to control and plan their lives. For pro-life activists motherhood is the most important role a woman can have, so much so that they think that "any woman who cannot commit herself fully to it should avoid it entirely." Motherhood is not unimportant to pro-choice activists, but it is only one of the roles that they see themselves filling in the course of their lives. Not surprisingly these contrasting views also color attitudes and expectations about husbands, sex, marriage, contraception, and gender role expectations.

Each view, as Luker's social profiles show, is accompanied by specific educational, cultural, social, religious, and economic characteristics. In this sample 60 percent of pro-life activists finished college; most pro-choice activists were college graduates, and 37 percent had post-graduate training. Family income is lower for pro-life activists than for pro-choice — only partly a function of the fact that pro-choice activists are far more likely to work outside their homes than their pro-life counterparts. Pro-life activists tend to have larger families; pro-choice smaller families. Pro-life activists are disproportionately Catholic; pro-choice activists tend to claim no religion or to consider themselves vaguely Protestant (however, 20 percent said they were raised Catholics, 42 percent Protestant, and 15 percent Jewish). Though Luker's sample is drawn from California, she argues on the basis of additional sampling she did elsewhere and of work done by others that these contrasting characteristics are not unrepresentative of pro-life, pro-choice activists throughout the country.

There is a danger in this form of sociological analysis of reducing what pro-life people see as a major moral problem to class issues — education, income, social status. I think Luker avoids that danger by scrupulously setting forth and taking seriously the moral, philosophical, and religious views people say they hold on this issue, and by carefully attending to the differing views people have on the moral standing of the fetus — what constitutes protectable human life. In fact, early in the book Luker points out

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that the civic consensus on abortion prior to the sixties rested on false assumptions about what "everybody" believed about the fetus. Most Catholics tended to assume that everyone shared their view that the fetus was a human being deserving of full protection; others,non-believers, Jews, and some Protestants, tended to assume that everyone shared their view that the question of humanness and therefore full protection was ambiguous and certainly not an absolute when it came to the mother's health and well-being. One of the shocks of *Roe* v. *Wade* was that people found out that there was not an agreement on this central question.

Luker's social profiles do raise a perplexing question, however. Are pro-life activists, and the grass-roots movement they founded, an endangered species? Single-parent and two-income families are becoming the norm in our society; fewer and fewer families can afford to have a non-income-producing wife at home. The stay-at-home mom is becoming a rare breed. In fact, pro-choice activists in Luker's sample are significantly less active in their "cause" then their pro-life counterparts, in part, of course, because their views are already embodied in the law. But as wives, mothers, and full-time participants in the labor market, they have far less time to devote to "voluntary activities." Present pro-life activists may not have a generation to follow them. Does that mean the end of the pro-life movement?

Probably not. But a very different movement may be taking shape, as last summer's pro-life convention in Kansas City tended to confirm: the pro-life agenda has in significant ways been incorporated into the political program of Protestant fundamentalists and right-wing politicians, both groups that diverge from grass-roots pro-lifers in significant ways. The pro-life agenda seems to have acquired a staying power beyond that of the distinctive group of activists who founded and sustained it over the past decade.

It is a puzzle why the Democratic party can't seem to absorb that fact. Perhaps as a result of this past summer's imbroglio between Governor Mario Cuomo and Archbishop John O'Connor, liberal and left Catholics may have the opportunity to work at a new political formulation. Their appropriation of the standard liberal view, "while personally opposed to abortion, I will not impose my views on others," has come to sound fairly hollow. If this once was a way for Catholics to avoid the abortion issue, it is now quite clearly a mistake from which they must honestly take their distance. Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" formulation of a consistent ethic of life is one way in which to begin to rethink the question. New coalitions may be possible with other non-Catholic liberals troubled by the seemingly casual nature of many abortion decisions and the growing number of women who have repeat abortions. (Interestingly, Luker's sample of pro-choice activists were also troubled by this issue, partly because they regard abortion as a step to be taken in extremis, and not as a routine method of birth control.)

This does not mean that there is likely to be any rush to support a constitutional ban on abortions; it may mean that a long-term process of negotiating some limits on abortion (time, reasons, funding) could be initiated by liberals along with a tacit recognition among pro-life stalwarts that in this area law is an exceedingly blunt instrument for controlling behavior. Other means — social, educational, cultural, and moral — will have to be developed so that a pro-life decision becomes a willingly chosen one by more women in our society.

Though I have strayed from Luker's argument, the spirit of her book and her own analysis in the final chapter point to some important lessons for everyone in this debate: One is that neither pro-life nor pro-choice activists represent the views of most Americans on the issue of abortion: most Americans (including Catholics) think at least some abortions should be legal and medically available, but there is no majority agreement on what constitutes a justifiable reason for abortion, except rape, incest, and saving the life of the mother. There is room here for a few courageous politicians to focus our political attention on a consensus that

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would begin to reduce the number of abortions. The second lesson Luker offers is her impressive empathic powers and the ability to convey with deep sympathy the views of radically opposed groups; she provides a model for any group that wants to begin settling this issue — a settlement that will satisfy neither group of activists, but may actually begin to deal with realistic policy options for resolving a tragedy whose origins lie as much in sociological, cultural, and sexist practices as in moral confusion and obfuscation.

Valet girl

A SERVANT'S TALE

Paula Fox

North Point Press, $16.50. 320 pp.

Linda Simon

SERVANTS know their masters' secrets. From their posts upstairs, downstairs, backstairs, they have a privileged view of the privileged classes. Anonymous, invisible, flies on the wall and the pitcher's ears, they are able to observe a reality closed to the rest of us: private vanities and foibles, hidden trials and unspoken troubles. As a literary device, the perceptive servant is a useful character in the hands of a skilled novelist. In Paula Fox's hands, the Hispanic maid Luisa de la Cueva emerges as one of the most memorable characters in contemporary fiction; her tale is a delicately wrought study of the sources of oppression and liberation in our own time.

Luisa de la Cueva, illegitimate daughter of the kitchen maid Fefita Sanchez and Orlando de la Cueva, her employer's son and heir, grows up on the tiny Caribbean island of San Pedro, in a village dominated physically by the de la Cuevas' sugar mill, and psychologically by poverty, ignorance, and superstition. Malagita seems frozen in time, with traditions held not so much to affirm a sense of community, as out of fear of change. It seems a place forgotten by the outside world — until there begin rumors of political unrest, of an uprising. "A revolution was a pitiful thing," Luisa reflects. "It made people think something different was going to happen."

When the revolution threatens to depose the de la Cuevas from their lofty state, Luisa's father (who in a moment of passion married his plump, passive Fefita) decides that the three must emigrate to the United States. Fefita is horrified. She cannot conceive of existing anywhere but in tiny Malagita; she cannot conceive of any existence for herself except that of servant.

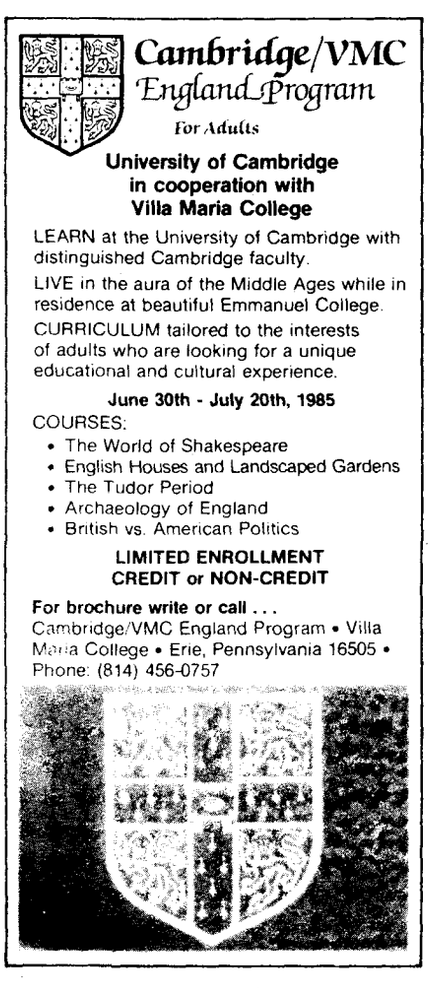
It is 1936. In New York, the family moves from tenement to tenement, taking in boarders so that they can manage to pay their rent. Fefita can hardly venture out without her daughter. She cannot learn English. She cannot assert herself into a world she sees as threatening and alien. Orlando cannot find a job, then finally — shamefully for him — becomes a street-sweeper. Luisa goes to school.

She is forced to memorize Wordsworth and Emily Dickinson, while she longs for Malagita, the simpler life, her beloved grandmother. Her friend Ellen Dove, a black girl with enormous drive and high aspirations, tries to instill in Luisa a sense of possibility. She must stay in school, she tells her; she must go to college, must free herself from the world of her parents. But Luisa wants to work, to save her money, and to go home.

Her barrio, she decides, is just another village, only dirtier and noisier than Malagita. She is no less isolated from the outside world, no more effective. When America enters the Second World War, Luisa sees soldiers and admits, "I couldn't imagine where they were going, what might happen to them." She reads Hollywood gossip, stops reading war news. She quits school and becomes a live-in maid.

To Orlando it appears that Luisa is following in her mother's timid, ineffectual footsteps. "I had no reason to hope for more," he tells Luisa. "But I did hope." Even her first employers, the ideologically liberal Millers, think Luisa should do something "better": "You could go to night school, you know," Mr. Miller offers. She could make something of herself. But Luisa replies coolly, "I'm glad to be working for you." At last she feels she has control over her life. Her choice is a deliberate act.

For Luisa, work — and she sees a life as a servant as decent, honest work — is liberating. She is treated with respect and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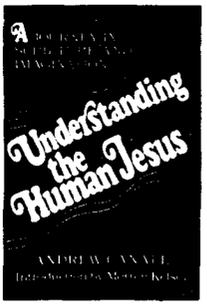

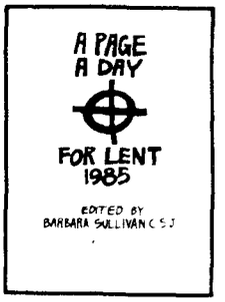

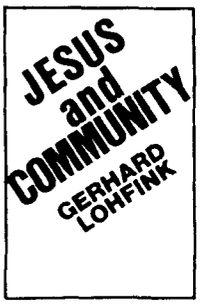

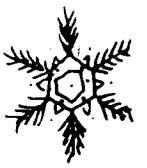

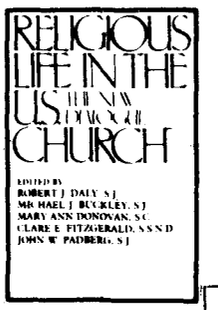

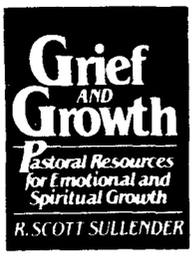

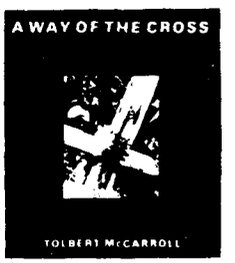

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maintains her dignity and independence. After her marriage ends (her husband, a magazine editor, tries to make her over according to his own expectations), she patches together several jobs and manages to support herself and her son, Charlie.

And being a servant has another attraction for Luisa: she believes it may enable her to penetrate the mystery of a society that seems unfathomable, a society populated by men and women oppressed by forces within themselves and without, suffering, complicating their lives, and rarely connecting on anything but a superficial level.

Fox portrays Luisa's many employers as sympathetically as she does Luisa herself. The flighty, hard-drinking Phoebe Burgess and her cranky son Brian; the eccentric Mrs. Justen, tireless rescuer of stray animals ("As long as people are cruel to animals, they'll be cruel to each other," she righteously tells Luisa), whose capacity for love excludes her own mother; Gerda Mortimer, an aging hippie, and her seductive husband; a homosexual antique dealer, whose gentleness wins Luisa's affection — all are deftly etched, palpable characters with desires, dreams, agonies, and fears. Yet their essential mystery baffles Luisa and convinces her that she is an outsider. She tries to understand, reading "signs" in unmade beds and messy bureau drawers. But the world remains elusive.

When Mrs. Burgess seduces Charlie, Luisa is shattered and uncomphehending. "What are you doing with my son," she implores Mrs. Burgess. Phoebe Burgess's simple "I don't know," and Mrs. Justen's "She can't help herself," don't satisfy Luisa. She decides she must leave New York, and returns to San Pedro with the "intention that everything in my life would become clear when I set foot in Malagita." But Malagita has changed, with a huge plastics factory replacing the sugar mill, and a community that shuts her out. The child whose intrepid wanderings earned her the nickname "Luisa, *la viajera loca*" — the mad traveler — has become a woman without a home, a woman forever on the outside looking in.

Luisa's history coincides with large changes in the modern world — one great war and several smaller ones, the depression of the thirties, the civil rights movement, the disaffected sixties — but these are peripheral to Fox's interest: the eternal, pervasive needs of human existence. As in her previous novels, *The Western Coast, Desperate Characters, A Widow's Children*, Fox is concerned with the cataclysmic moments of private lives, and the quiet desperation of ordinary people.

"Fascination with the uncommon man"

THOMAS EAKINS

THE HEROISM OF MODERN LIFE

Elizabeth Johns

Princeton University Press, $42.50, 207 pp.

Nicolaus Mills

In the 1870s when Thomas Eakins began to do his first great work, the Hudson River School and its preoccupation with the American wilderness still exerted the dominant influence on painting in the United States. Eakins's art flew in the face of the romanticism of the Hudson River School, and in turning to the middle-class, urban world of Philadelphia from 1870 to 1910, he demonstrated, as no other figure of his era, the capacity of a new realism to capture the changes occurring in post-Civil War America.

The achievement is one that has prompted Eakins's most renowned critic, Lloyd Goodrich, to describe him as the "most profound realist in nineteenth and early twentieth century American art" and to declare, "His realism was total: with rare exceptions, every subject was drawn from the world around him, every figure was a portrait of an individual, every scene a real place, every object an actual one." It is a view that has become the standard wisdom on Eakins, and with the publication of Goodrich's massive two-volume study of Eakins in 1982, the last word seemed to have been given on Eakins's "pure realism."

With the publication of Elizabeth Johns's *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life*, that is no longer the case. What Johns contends—and establishes—is that Eakins was anything but a pure realist in subject matter or technique. Her argument rests on two points. The first is that Eakins had an income from his father and could paint what was significant to him. He could afford to be a portraitist who did not rely on commissions. The second is that, while Eakins was by contemporary standards a realist, he was not exclusively so. There are large areas in his canvases where his technique sacrificed objectivity in order to be free, experimental, and on occasion deliberately clumsy.

Johns's view of Eakins seems at first glance to depart from orthodoxy on such narrow grounds that only a handful of Eakins scholars would appear to have reason to concern themselves with it. But the reverse in fact is the case. Johns's point is that what distinguishes Eakins from the society portraitists of his era is that he was not committed to celebrating the new business class. He had the imagination and technical freedom to portray "the heroism of modern life" in very different terms, to show it in amateur athletes, artists, musicians, doctors—people for whom intelligence and self-discipline rather than money-making were most important. Thus in his early masterpiece, *Max Schmitt in a Single Scull* (1871), Eakins felt free to place himself in a racing scull as authoritative witness to Schmitt's skill. In *The Gross Clinic* (1875) he used theatrical rather than natural lighting to dramatize the science of modern surgery. And in *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (1877), he created an entirely fictional scene in the life of a sculptor who had been dead for over forty years in order to make his own case for the importance of an artist working directly from the nude.

What follows from this picture of Eakins and his fascination with the "uncommon man" is an understanding of his work richer and more incisive than any

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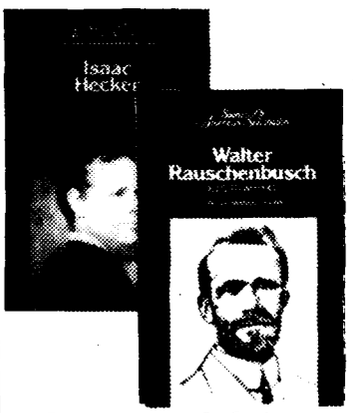

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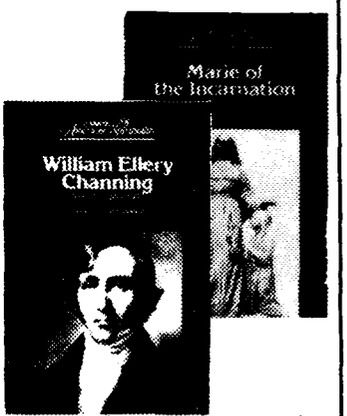

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we have had to date. It explains why, despite his technical virtuosity, Eakins achieved so little popularity with the Philadelphia establishment of his generation and why in an era such as ours, when the heroism of modern life once again seems to need defining, he should spark such interest.

The warring couple

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

W.W. Meissner, S.J., M.D.
Yale University, $25, 254 pp.

Stephen A. Kurtz

THE PHRASE "between the Scylla of x and the Charybdis of y" occurs twice in this labored text, and I take the repetition to be meaningful. William W. Meissner, who is both a Jesuit priest and a classically trained psychoanalyst, has divided himself between two historically embattled shores. The temperate route he steers between them has not been without its cost: this book is devoid of passion.

Why would an author treat the two most central themes of his life — ones whose conflicts he hopes to reconcile — without a single reference to himself? As an analyst, of course, he may wish to maintain anonymity, designed to safeguard his patients' transferences. But other analysts, beginning with Freud, have gotten around this by attributing their experiences to others. Meissner takes another tack: he discusses no one. The result is a book whose abstract tone is unmitigated from beginning to end.

There is one exception. The only person whose life and thought are reviewed at length — for over half the book in fact — is Freud. But here the purpose is not to illuminate a religious life through psychoanalytic insight. Freud had no religious life — at least none he could identify as such. As a consequence, what the founder of psychoanalysis had to say about this subject was not particularly interesting. Freud's views on the development of monotheism, for example, depended on misinformation only corrected by later scholarship. Such problems face anyone attempting to interpret a still fluid fact-base, and the basis of historical interpretation is inherently fluid. Freud addressed the psychology of religion, then, with the limitations of contemporary historical knowledge. He faced them as well with those of current psychoanalytic theory and, since that theory was his invention, its limitations inevitably reflected his own. The outcome was an inability to conceive of religious experience in any but reductionistic terms. The elaboration by later generations of an ego psychology, an object-relations theory, and a self psychology enriched the original conceptual system in ways that can genuinely illuminate religious life. When Meissner begins to discuss these contributors (if only in the most schematic terms), he launches the book itself. (If Jung's thought is included in the realm of psychoanalysis, the system was already enriched in Freud's lifetime. Meissner does not discuss the relevance of Jung, or of subsequent work by Bion and Lacan, whose concepts have important bearing on the psychology of faith.)

Why, then, discuss Freud so thoroughly, only to conclude he has so little of value to say? The answer turns on the place of Freud in the orthodox institutions of psychoanalysis, and especially its training programs. Because of his position as Master, no later disciple has felt able to say something new without first paying his respects — acknowledging Freud's authority (and that of the institutions which inherit it) even in the course of contradicting him.

The influence of academic psychoanalytic training (and of Jesuit training?) at its most stultifying pervades the rest of the book as well. Many of Meissner's views are offered as quotations from the writings of others or, if given as his own, are immediately backed by references. The absence of his own voice is thoroughgoing. When Freud said, *"Wo Es war, soll Ich werden"* (where id was ego shall be), surely he didn't have this flat result in mind.

Perhaps I should be kinder to one whose mission is to sail for dear life between a man-eating monster and a whirlpool. But Meissner's attempts to bring religion and psychoanalysis together only drive them further apart. What warring couple, after all, was ever helped by rational exhortation? When the bullets fly, each new argument for ceasing fire provokes a counter-argument for not. The rational discourse of reconciliation keeps the battle alive.

Because he is so unremittingly intellectual, Meissner loses the fact that, experientially, religion and psychoanalysis are not so disparate. Oskar Pfister, the Lutheran pastoral counselor who through years of correspondence was Freud's admiring antagonist, knew this from Freud's work, and I feel sure that Meissner knows it from his own. Without muttering words or even thinking of God, to be in the analytic situation is to be at prayer and to be a conduit for grace. Words to that effect were said to me at a moment when I felt the need to "reconcile" the two. I heard them as an epiphany. There was no need to get from "here" to "there," I realized. Here was already there.

That is the level on which religion and psychoanalysis get reconciled: not through ideology but through experience and, perhaps, a well-attuned interpretation.

If some people exemplify faith in their lives, does it matter what they claim to believe? From a pietistic point of view, the heretic can be a better Christian than the orthodox believer. The gentle and loving Pfister argued to Freud's face that Freud was "much better and deeper than your disbelief." Although well intended and quite possibly true, such statements (like premature interpretation) are ill-advised. At best they bounce off; at worst they elevate resistance. But if Pfister scored any points at all he did so through his loyalty and care much more than through his arguments.

If the capacity for a higher level, conscious faith is a developmental achievement, as Meissner suggests, then, if all goes well, such faith will be achieved. If all goes poorly, it will not. But in no

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major way does this achievement result from intellectual persuasion, which comes after the graceful event.

If there is a heaven and God saw fit to put them there, then Pfister and Freud, two old and civilized men, are sitting peacefully in some cloud-borne café delighting in God's presence and in one another's company. If, on the other hand, there is a hell, and God saw fit to put them there, then they are debating still.

Matrimonial developments

THE KNIGHT, THE LADY AND THE PRIEST

Georges Duby

Translated by Barbara Bray
Pantheon, $16.95, 311 pp.

R.H. Helmholz

THE HISTORIAN of Europe before 1200 must have an imagination. The sources from which he can draw are few, and what sources exist were compiled by a clerical elite whose preoccupations with the supremacy of the spiritual conceal as much as they tell about the realities of life. Unless he is to become a slave to his sources, the medieval historian has no choice but to rely on a trained imagination. The only fair test of his success will be whether he has used it coherently, with fidelity to all the evidence, and so as to illuminate the past.

Georges Duby passes this test with colors flying. His subject is the evolution of modern marriage. The time is the north of France between the tenth and early thirteenth centuries. The method is the accumulation of vignettes from sources of every possible character. The working assumption is that, at the start of the period, there were two quite distinct "models" of marriage. The first, and the only one for which we have direct evidence, was the clerical. The second was a secular "model" now obscured by clerical domination of the written evidence, but a coherent and sensible position nevertheless. By the end of the period the two had coalesced, mostly (though not completely) by the triumph of the clerical position.

Re-creation of the secular "model" is the accomplishment of this book. Since the laymen who held it were illiterate and left no memorials, we can only judge it from the writings of the clerics who opposed it. That is what Duby does. The "model" had four principal features. First, marriage was essentially a secular matter, both in its inception and its dissolution. Priests had a tiny role to play, limited to trifles like blessing the nuptial bed. If a man determined to repudiate his wife, for reasons worthy or unworthy, the clergy had no coercive power to stop him. Second, marriages were properly used to further the honor, the glory, and the wealth of the family. To this end, the kinship disqualifications beloved of the clerical order could be disregarded except for the closest relations, and to this end marriages could readily be put asunder. There was no such thing as an indissoluble union. Third, men were firmly in control. Women were pawns in the serious game of marriage. A tenth-century layman would have found equality of rights in marriage an idea subversive of right order. Fourth, the notion that sexual practice should be confined to legitimate marriage was a monkish platitude, unrelated to real life. According to the secular "model," there was legitimate room for open concubinage, for easy license by young men, for forcible abduction of desirable women, even for high-minded adultery.

Against these positions stood the clergy. Their opposition was not, of course, total. Monks held nothing like the modern view that the sexes were equal, and many bishops co-operated with laymen in dismissing their barren or inconvenient wives. But struggle between the two there was, forming one part of the conflict which it has become almost normal to call "the Papal Revolution." Duby shows the conflict between these ideals in profuse detail. He cumulates examples of marriages that raised the opposition between secular and clerical views. He shows the process by which the clerical positions came to prevail, at least on the level of theory. Duby does not claim that all the church's rules ever came to be fully observed in practice. No sensible person could claim that. However, by 1215 laymen and clerics had come to hold the same views of what marriage ought to be. What had disappeared was the separate lay "model" of marriage.

This re-creation of the past owes much to imaginative reconstruction. Much of the evidence is equally compatible with a less dramatic view of the evolution of marriage, one with occasional disagreement inside a shared tradition, with frequent lapses from the ideal, and with gradual evolution of both clerical and lay views about the nature of marriage. For instance, although some men undoubtedly repudiated their wives, they invariably justified this action by alleging one of the church's rules of kinship disqualification. Was this a sop to the priests, covering a belief that dissolution of a marriage needed no justification but family convenience? Or did both orders accept the same rules, but manage to manipulate them just as men and women today manipulate rules of law for their own benefit? The evidence is equivocal. Even the clerical view is not always clear. Dispensations to permit marriages between kin were given. Clerics stood on both sides of disputes over repudiation. It is not always easy to say whether layman and cleric held radically different views of the indissolubility of marriage or whether they agreed on the basic rules but disagreed on the application of the rules in individual cases. Duby says the former, but the latter is possible.

To point to the element of imagination in Duby's "models" of marriage is not, however, to condemn his work. He has no choice but to image the past, and he passes the only fair test. The story is coherent. It makes sense of much human action that otherwise seems incomprehensible. It *is* faithful to the evidence, even if alternate readings are possible. And it illuminates the history of marriage. Whether a reader will be entertained by this book may depend upon a liking for social history told through a collection of vignettes. But there is no

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doubt that any reader will come away from these pages with fresh insights into the long and tangled history of matrimony.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 2)

Intra-Catholic power struggles aside, an undeniable element in this dispute is that Ferraro is a woman. Does anyone imagine that Catholic "truth squads" would systematically disrupt the rallies of a candidate who was either male or Protestant?

An almost certain outcome of these assaults is that the next female candidate for national office will not be a Catholic. No party would voluntarily saddle itself with such a handicap. How ironic that what Mondale hath loosed in San Francisco, Archbishop O'Connor hath rebound in New York.

RONALD R. STOCKTON

Star wars a deterrent

Kensington, Md.

To the Editors: The Rev. Hehir's comments on the Strategic Defense Initiative or so-called Star Wars proposal [October 19] helped to outline the debate on defensive weapons which is certain to heat up in the next congressional session. Two points should be added to Hehir's comments.

First, the recently released (and neglected) report on Soviet violations of weapons' treaties indicated that they have proceeded with an ABM system (defensive). Second, a defensive system certainly has a deterrent effect so that the argument between "defense" and "deterrent" will prove no help in determining nuclear strategy.

MARTIN J. GERRA, JR.

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Kirkridge Gathering

The Company at Kirkridge, a supportive network for contemporary Christians willl meet March 8, 9, 10, 1985, at Mt. Saviour monastery, Elmira, NY. Gregory Baum, St. Michael's College, Toronto, will speak on the "Emergence of a New Prophetic Christianity." Join us and become part of an ongoing group, women-men, cleric-lay, Catholic-Protestant, in the search for meaningful patterns of companionship, mutual support and challenge. For more information write Anthony Ciccariello, 520 W. Gray St., Elmira, NY 14905.

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A banner year?

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This year, however, we must extend those thanks even more widely. Nearly two hundred new Associates have joined the ranks of these special friends of the magazine. Thanks to them, we have been able to expand our editorial staff and initiate new efforts to seek a wider audience. With the help of even more of our readers (hint, hint), we hope to make 1985 a banner year in the magazine's history. To all Associates, present and future, our thanks.

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